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In Pawn*

A SMALL-TOWN COMEDY DRAMA OF THE MIDDLE WEST

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ILLUSTRATED BY R. L. LAMBDIN

LEM REDDING had a dimple in his cheek that appeared when he smiled. For a boy with a face full of freckles, he was nice-looking. He had clear, bright gray eyes, and his smile, aided by the dimple, made most folks love him at sight. His hair was brown, as his dead mother's had been.

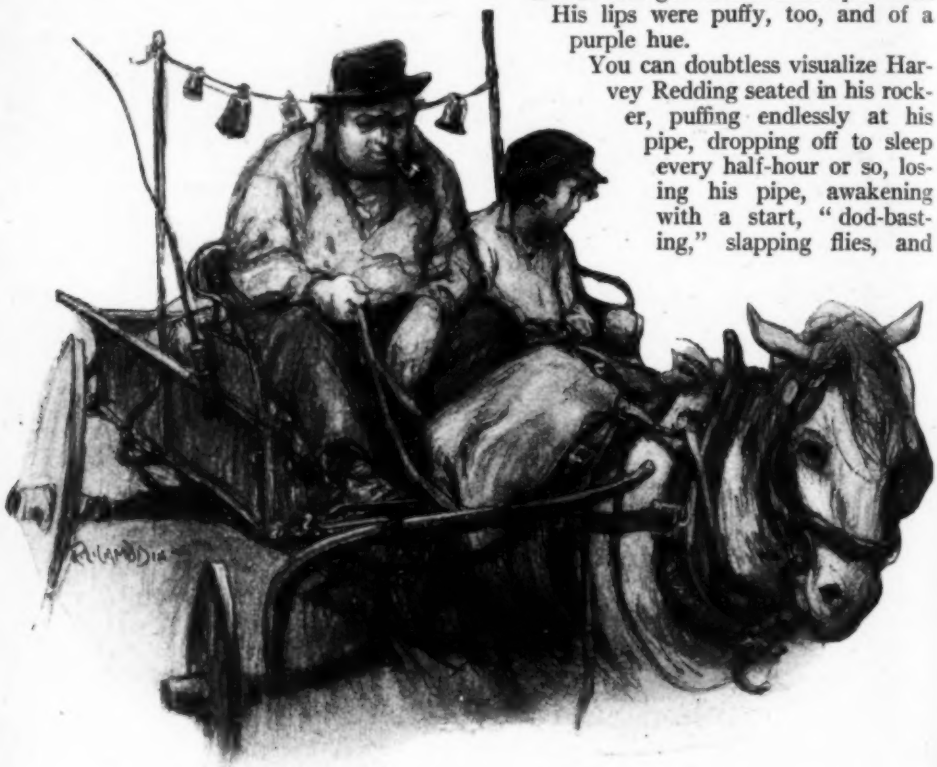
In fact, he was much like that mother in more ways than one — far more like her than he was like Harvey Redding, his father. Lem was quick, agile, lively; Harvey was plumb lazy—the laziest man in or near Riverbank. He was one of the heaviest men, too, for he was a glutton. He loved food. He ate too much, he drank too much, and he sat too much—all of which increased his girth. He was as huge as *Falstaff*.

For two or three years Harvey Redding had been meaning to get a new belt, but somehow he never "got around to it." For quite a while the tongue of his belt-buckle had been in the last hole, while Harvey himself kept right on enlarging. As a result, the belt made a tight band around his middle, and seemed to be cutting him in two. When Harvey leaned forward, the belt entirely disappeared under a great roll of fat, and his face turned purple.

In most respects Harvey was the best-natured, easiest-going man in the world; but he had fits of intense irritation, when he lost his temper entirely and "dod-basted" like a trooper. These spells usually came when he had to do any work.

Moving was work for him. He lost his placidity if he had to get out of his chair

to close a door, or put a stick of wood in the stove, or do any hard labor of that sort. He also lost his temper over accidents, as when he fell asleep in his chair—as he did every half-hour during the day—and his lighted pipe fell in at the open bosom of his gray flannel shirt and burned his skin. At such times he " dod-basted " everybody and everything, and almost got out of his chair.



HARVEY HAD TRIED THE RETAIL ICE BUSINESS, THE MILK BUSINESS, A CARTER'S TRADE, A VEGETABLE MARKET, A SMALL GROCERY, AND FINALLY THE JUNK BUSINESS

The chair he liked best was an ancient hickory rocker, which he had braced and trussed with stout wires. On the seat was a round cushion covered with green rep, worn threadbare and flattened by long use.

Harvey's hair was thin and iron-gray, and he never brushed it, because brushing hair meant exertion. On the top of his cranium was a spot entirely bald. There were times when Harvey thought that if the world had no flies to alight on that bald spot, and no people to make him get out of his chair, he might be perfectly happy.

But the flies made him ferocious. He slapped at them, when they alighted on his head, with a vigor that would possibly have crushed his skull if his hands had not been like rubber gloves inflated to puffiness. His lips were puffy, too, and of a purple hue.

You can doubtless visualize Harvey Redding seated in his rocker, puffing endlessly at his pipe, dropping off to sleep every half-hour or so, losing his pipe, awakening with a start, " dod-basting," slapping flies, and picking up his fallen reading-matter again, grunting as he reached for it.

He was a great reader. He read dime novels and a certain " Lives of the Saints." He had a pile of three hundred or more dime novels, and some of his favorites he had read so often that they were mere rags.

The " Lives of the Saints " was a later favorite. He had found it in a pile of waste paper he had bought—he was at that time in the junk business—and had found its pages fascinating. He had his favorite saints, just as he had his favorite dime-novel heroes, and he not only read about them but thought about them. He would sit in his rocker by the hour, slapping flies, smoking his pipe, and thinking what he would have done if he had been St. Francis, St. George, or St. Anthony.

His son Lem was a great comfort to him. Lem could feed the horse, run across the street for another package of smoking-tobacco, get a handful of matches, and make life fairly endurable by doing most of the work that needed to be done. It interfered with Lem's schooling, but Harvey did not mind that. Lem sat on the seat of the junk-wagon when Harvey went out for junk, the string of cow-bells clanking on the rope stretched between the two uprights on the wagon. If by any chance a woman signaled the wagon, Lem got down and went to see what she had to sell. Lem weighed the junk, carried it to the wagon, and carried the money back to her.

There was one thing Harvey would not let Lem do—he would not let him drive the horse. He told Lem it was not safe, but a kitten could have driven the old gray wreck. Harvey liked to do it himself. It was an occupation suitable for a contemplative mind. It gave him an excuse to sound authoritative. He could shout at the horse if it flicked its tail at a fly, and "dod-baste" it if the tail went over a rein.

"Dod baste you, you brute! Lem, git down and lift that line from under that hoss's tail," he would command.

In the few years since Lem's mother had died, Harvey had been in half a dozen businesses, all centering around the horse and the small house on the ample vacant lot on Elm Street. He had tried the retail ice business, the milk business, a carter's trade, a vegetable market, a small grocery business, and finally the junk business. He had a perfectly good excuse for failure in each—unfair, dod-basted, ruinous, cut-throat competition—and now this same nemesis was attacking his junk business. The Russian Jews had come to Riverbank—especially Moses Shuder.

At the time when a great pogrom and persecution was taking place in Russia, tender-hearted Riverbank had raised a fund to pay the passage of some of the Russian Jews from their unhappy country to Riverbank. Eight came, with their families. Riverbank looked at them, said they were perfectly awful creatures, and kept as far from them as possible; and the Russian Jews began picking up old bottles, empty tin cans, bits of rags, and pieces of paper. They found wealth—meager wealth at first—beside the fences, in the roads, in vacant lots, where no American would have bothered to look for it.

Presently Moses Shuder was buying the scrap-iron and old bottles that his fellows picked up. He hired a vacant lot and built a rough shed, and from a despised, ignored alien became "competition" and the rival junkman of Riverbank. He bought an old bone-bag of a horse, bought other horses, bought the lot he had rented, bought a small cottage.

Poorly clad, meek, shrewd, silent when abused and voluble when bargaining, Moses became a fixture and a feature. He lent money to Russian Jews who came from the old country, and sent them out with peddlers' packs of tinware, cheap dry-goods, and profitable small notions. Before he had been in Riverbank many years, Mrs. Shuder began wearing a hat and talking of the time when "our people" would erect a synagogue.

Before Moses Shuder and his fellows had been in Riverbank long, Harvey began to feel pessimistic about the junk business.

"Dod-basted fleas, hoppin' around everywhere all the time!" he said. "Live on a crust of bread and half a drink of water. Don't know how to live like human folks. If this kind of thing keeps on I want to get out of the junk business, that's what!"

The trouble with Harvey was not that Moses Shuder was in the junk business, but that Harvey was not and never had been. The bitter truth about Harvey is that he had never been in any business. He had merely let one or another business frame his copious leisure; his businesses were no more than excuses for being lazy. They camouflaged what otherwise would have been disgraceful sloth.

Harvey had been a farm-hand until he married the farmer's daughter. Then he had teased her to sell the farm, and they had come to town. Half the price of the farm went the first year, part of it to purchase the lot and shack on Elm Street, and the rest to make good the losses incurred by Harvey's mode of doing business.

Then his wife put her foot down. She went to a lawyer, and had the remaining money tied up in such a manner that Harvey could not touch it; and thereafter all he ever got was the twenty-five dollars a month his wife allotted to him from the income. While she lived he received that twenty-five dollars a month, and after she died he continued to receive it. She had been a weary, weak creature, but he had

"IF I HAD ANY SECURITY TO GIVE YOU— I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO," HARVEY WENT ON. "I'LL LEAVE LEM WITH YOU UNTIL I GET YOU PAID UP"

never been able to change her resolution in this one matter. The money was for Lem.

When the vegetable market dried up and blew away with the last of Harvey's capital, Lem's mother had been dead several years, and Harvey turned to his sister. He went up the hill to where she conducted a boarding-house, and explained to her the great opportunity that awaited the man who started a grocery on Elm Street. In the end he came away with the money.

"I ain't askin' you to give me it with nothin' to show for it, Sue," he told her. "I wouldn't ask that. I wouldn't take it if you offered it to me that way. I aim to give you my note for it, my regular signed note, drawin' seven per cent interest until paid. A man might go back on his word, but a note is a note, and it's got to be paid as and when specified."

So Sue Redding had the note and Harvey had her money, and for a while he enjoyed sitting behind a counter telling Lem to hand out canned corn and bluing and to weigh out sugar. When Lem was at school, Harvey found it more comfortable to sit in the rocker and tell the children who came to buy that he guessed he was out of whatever it was they asked for. When he had no more money with which to replenish his stock, he sold what remained of the grocery and took up the junk business.

The junk business had the advantage of being a slow, sedentary business. When one wished, one could sit and smoke; when the weather was favorable, one could tell Lem to harness the horse and then take a slow, comfortable drive through bough-shaded streets, nobly heralded by clanking cow-bells. There was no money to be made

"IT JUST SHOWS HOW WORTHLESS YOU ARE, HARVEY REDDING, OFFERING TO PAWN YOUR ONLY SON LIKE HE WAS A PIECE OF JUNK"

in the junk business as Harvey conducted it, but there could not be much loss; and always, regularly, the twenty-five dollars allowance came to him on the first of the month. It was ideal.

Even Moses Shuder, despite Harvey's complaints, was a blessing. He was an excuse for the lack of profit in the junk business, and he was something to talk of and grow angry about. Harvey seemed to be, at last, in an ideal business, and one in which he could remain forever.

And then the old horse died.

When Lem, sent to feed the horse, came back from the shack at the far end of the lot and reported that the old horse was dead, Harvey "dod-basted" his luck heartily.

"Well," he drawled a moment later, "if he's dead, he's dead, and it ain't no fault of mine. You go down-town, Lem, and see who you can git to haul him away for about two dollars."

The boy hurried away. Harvey puffed at his pipe and looked out of the gate of the junk-yard at the street. It was late June. Now and then he slapped the bald spot on his head vigorously. He was giving things more thought than he had given anything in years.

His affairs had reached a crisis. He could not be a junkman without a horse, and he had no money with which to buy another horse. He owed Sue five hundred dollars, and, the way she had been pressing him for payments recently, he knew she was not likely to lend him more. She was pestering him unmercifully for what he already owed her.

With his twenty-five dollars a month he

could get along well enough, with no business to demand part of it, but he saw no comfort in life if Sue was to be continually drumming at him and nagging him for the repayment of her money. But for Sue, he could give up the pretense of being in business and take life comfortably.

Unfortunately, however, he knew that Sue had left him in semi-peace only because he appeared to be doing business. When she learned that he was not even attempting to make money, she would be too annoying for comfort. Harvey sighed heavily and took up his book. It was the "Lives of the Saints."

When Lem returned with a negro and a team of horses, Harvey put his hand in his trousers pocket, gave the negro two dollars, and went on reading. A few minutes later he looked up from his book, for the negro's team had stopped with their noses at his shoulder.

"'Say, what you hauling that carcass out this way for?" Harvey demanded. "Why don't you take it out the back way?"

"'Cause, boss, de gate ain't wide 'nuff. Got to go out dis yere way."

"Well, dod baste it, I guess I got to move!" said Harvey.

He got up out of his rocker, groaned, moved it three feet to the left, and lost himself in the "Lives of the Saints" again.

II

RIVERBANK in June is beautiful. Climbing the hills above the Mississippi, the streets are arches of elms and maples, the grass is richly green, and the shrubs are in blossom.

Up one of these rather steep hill streets, the last day of June, Harvey Redding climbed, with Lem now at his side and now falling behind to investigate something that caught his attention. Harvey was hot. He had put on a coat, and the sun was warm and the climb stiff for a fat man. He stopped once in a while to take off his hat and wipe his face. When he did so, he called to Lem with unwonted gentleness:

"Lem, you come here! Don't be straying around all over the neighborhood!"

To these mild commands Lem paid no attention whatever.

Occasionally, but not often, other pedestrians passed them, going up or down the hill. To some of these Harvey spoke, stopping for long conversations about the weather or similar exciting subjects. Those he did not know passed by without speaking. Now and then a boy went by, and Lem straightened up and looked at him.

The peculiar thing was that, although Harvey was on his way to see his creditor sister, his fat, puffy face was strangely placid. Now and then, when he paused for breath, he folded his plump hands across his plump belly. When he spoke to a foot passenger it was slowly, with carefully chosen words and in a gentle voice. He was almost meek.

There was something else peculiar about Harvey this day. He was not smoking his old black pipe. You might have said that he knew Susan would give him "Hail Columbia," and that he had prepared for it by assuming in advance an attitude of perfect non-resistance; but this was not the secret of his strangely gentle demeanor.

It was rather late in the afternoon, the warmest time of day. Beyond the neatly painted fences and the trimmed lawns, the porches of some of the houses were brightened by the white dresses of ladies. In some of the yards the ladies, and now and then a young fellow, were playing croquet, the balls clicking together with a pleasant sound of well-seasoned wood. Lem put his face to the fences and stared in at these games, while Harvey puffed on ahead.

At Sue Redding's gate Harvey paused to wipe his face. The place was large—one hundred and twenty feet of white picket fence along the walk, with a terrace of six feet or more rising steeply inside the fence, so that only at the gate and beyond it could a man see those who sat on the wide porch. Harvey looked at the porch anxiously, but even at that distance—the big, white house was set far back—he could see that Sue was not on the porch, and he was relieved.

"Come here, Lem, dod—I mean, come here, Lem," he ordered. "Lemme look at your face. Don't seem to do no good to wash your face at all. Well—"

He opened the gate and climbed the steps to the walk that led, between two rows of pine-trees, to the porch.

Two young women, white-clad, were sitting on the step of the porch. One was one of Miss Redding's boarders; the other came from a house across the way.

"Miss Redding?" said the boarder, whom Harvey did not remember to have seen before. "She's in the kitchen, I think. I'll call her."

"Nemmine," said Harvey. "Me and

Lem 'll go right through. I'm her brother," he added in explanation.

He opened the screen door and passed into the cool, deep hall. Lem followed him.

Sue Redding was making cookies, cutting them out of the flattened dough with a fluted dough-cutter. She was a large woman, almost as heavy as Harvey himself, but remarkably quick in every movement for one so heavy. She turned when Harvey entered, but she did not seem particularly pleased to see him.

"Hello, Lem!" she said, greeting the boy first. "What you want now, Harvey? I don't suppose you've come to pay that note."

"I come to tell you, Sue, that I've given up business," Harvey said gently, as one not wishing to arouse anger.

The effect was magical. Miss Redding turned on him, her face flushing, her eyes gleaming.

"You come here and dare tell me that in my own kitchen?" she burst forth. "You don't dare give up business! What did you tell me when I let you go out of the grocery business and into the junk business, Harvey Redding? Didn't you say, 'If you let that note stand, I'll keep in business until I get it paid up, if it takes all my born days!' All right! I suppose you're here to pay up that note, then?"

"Well, now, Susan—"

"A nice right you have to come and say you are going to quit business! Of all the good-for-nothing—"

"The hoss died on me," said Harvey.

"What's that to me?" asked Susan. "I never heard that Moses Shuder ever stopped junking because he didn't have a horse. I never heard that I gave up keeping boarding-house because my cooks packed off without a fare-you-well. Horse, indeed! Harvey Redding, you promised me, when you gave up the grocery business and I pushed you for payment—"

"I know, Susan; I know!"

"And I know!" she declared. "I know what likelihood I've got to get my money back, if you give up the only chance you have to earn money!"

HIS PECULIAR POSITION, NOW THAT HE HAD GIVEN UP THE JUNK BUSINESS, GAVE HARVEY EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO BE A SAINT

"Of course, I'm mighty sorry," Harvey began.

"What do I care for your sorry?" she snapped. "I don't want your sorry — I want my money!"

"Well, I ain't got it, Susan," Harvey said. "I ain't got nothing. I ain't no good at business. I ain't cut out for it, and that's a fact; but I got something else in mind."

"I doubt it."

"I got an idee," said Harvey, refusing to be angered, "that if I don't have a business to pull me down all the time, I can save money out of what I get every month and pay you back that way. I might save ten dollars a month, or fifteen, maybe. It's so dod—it's so expensive runnin' a business, I just can't save nothing. With this here Moses Shuder butting into it, and hosses dying on me, and everything—"

Miss Redding turned back to her cookies to show that she considered them far more important than anything Harvey might say.

"I dare say!" she said sarcastically.

"So that's what I come up here to offer you, Susan," Harvey said. "I'll save and pay. You can count on it."

"Oh, I can, can I?"

"I can't do more than give you my word."

"You gave me your note, I remember. I guess your word ain't no better. You gave me your word you'd stay in business, as near as I can recall. I don't take much stock in your word!"

Harvey was worried now.

"Susan," he said, "I don't like you should take this here attitude. I'll say to you I've turned over a new leaf. I'll say to you I've got my bearings at last. I know what I was born to be. Business is no good for me. I know what I was intended for now; but if you're goin' to harass me day by day about that money—"

"You bet I'm going to harass you!" said Susan unfeelingly. "If I don't, I won't get back a cent, let alone interest. I'll harass—make sure of that!"

"If there was any security I could give—" said Harvey.

"With your lot all mortgaged up? A nice lot of security you could give!" She turned to him again. "I know you, Harvey. There ain't a bit of anything in you but laziness—not a mite. You'll promise whatever comes into your head, and the next minute you'll go right back on your word and oath and written note."

"Susan, I'll pay you back regular, every month, out of my twenty-five dollars, every cent I can scrape off—"

"I don't believe it!"

Harvey looked around helplessly.

"If I had any security to give you—" he said, and stopped short. An idea had come to him. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Susan," he went on. "I'll leave Lem with you. He can do chores and help you out one way and another. I'll leave Lem with you until I get you paid up."

The boy looked from his father to his aunt. Young though he was, he felt as if the solid earth had fallen from beneath his feet. He had a sickening feeling that no one wanted him or cared for him.

"He's like to be mine forever, then," said Susan grimly. "But I'll take him, although, goodness knows, he'll be more of a care than a help. It just shows how worthless you are, Harvey Redding, offering to pawn your only son like he was a piece of junk. You wait until I call Miss Percy. I want a witness, I do!"

"Now wait!" said Harvey, but she was gone.

When she returned, she brought the boarder whom Harvey had seen on the porch.

"Now say it," Miss Susan commanded.

"All I said was I would leave Lemuel—that's my boy yonder, miss—to Susan here, to keep until I got a sort of note I owe her paid up."

"Note and interest," said Susan.

"Note and interest," agreed Harvey.

"That you would leave Lemuel with me, like he was my son, with no fussing or interfering from you, Harvey—that's the understanding—like he was my own son, until that note and interest is paid up."

"Only you ain't to harass me," stipulated Harvey. "I'm to be left alone. I ain't to be everlastingly nagged."

"That's part of it," agreed Miss Redding grimly, "if you pay on that note regularly."

The smile that had beautified Lorna Percy's face when she entered the kitchen was gone now. She looked at the boy by the window. Harvey did not dare look at him, nor did Miss Susan. There was something monstrous in thus putting the child in pawn.

"Well, then?" said Harvey, rising heavily from his chair.

Lem looked at his father, his eyes filling with tears.

"Am I going to stay here?" he asked, forsakenly.

"Oh, you'll love it here!" cried Lorna, going to him suddenly, kneeling before him, and putting an arm around him. "Such cookies! Such a yard to play in!"

"Yes, I guess you'll stay here a while, Lem," Harvey said slowly. "You'll be a good boy for your aunt, won't you? You won't cut up any ruckus? You be a good boy, Lem, and I dare say I'll get you again before long."

Lorna looked up at Miss Susan. There were tears in the girl's eyes, too.

"Mayn't I take him out on the porch until the cookies are baked, Miss Susan?" she pleaded.

"Do so," said Miss Redding grimly. "I want a couple of words with my brother."

"Well, good-by, Lem," Harvey said hesitantly.

"Good-by," the boy answered, and Miss Percy took his hand and led him away.

Miss Susan finished cutting her cookies, placed them in the pan, pushed the pan in the oven, and slammed the oven door before she turned to Harvey.

"And I don't want any interference with the way I raise him," she said. "If so be you ever get me paid back, you'll have him again; but not until then. And all I can say is I'll do by him as if he was my own child. So that settles that! And now, Harvey, what do you mean to do with yourself, if you don't mean to do business?"

Harvey cleared his throat.

"I ain't come to this decision sudden, Susan," he said defensively. "I've thought it over a lot. I've read a lot on it and studied it over, and I feel it is what I was meant for. There ain't any reason why there shouldn't be one now, any more than in old times, if only somebody was inclined that way and took to it serious enough. I've studied how all of them did, and what they did—"

"For the land's sake!" exclaimed Miss Susan. "Whatever is it you mean to be?"

"Well," said Harvey, folding his fat hands across his stomach, "I've been studyin' up about saints in a 'Lives of the Saints' book, Susan, and if I can have a fair show at it I'm going to be a saint—a regular saint, Susan, like them they had in the old times."

"Great land of goodness!" Miss Susan cried.

She looked at Harvey with amazement; but it was evident that he meant it.

III

In many respects Harvey's desire to be a saint might be considered rational, and even praiseworthy. If there are no officially recognized saints among us of to-day, it is probably because other lines of high endeavor have seemed more attractive to those who might more or less easily qualify. It must be admitted that there is nothing essentially impossible in the idea of a twentieth-century saint. In reading the "Lives of the Saints" that had been his companion so long, Harvey had seen this quite clearly. To be a saint it was only necessary to be absolutely good, to be free from all sins and faults, great or small, and to be strikingly distinguished for nobility of soul and for acts of piety, grace, and self-abnegation.

Harvey considered that his peculiar position in life, now that he had given up the junk business, gave him exceptional opportunity to be a saint. For one thing he had no wife, and a wife is often a real impediment in the path of a man who wants to be a saint. He had no business cares to distract his thoughts from the higher things, and he had twenty-five dollars a month, less what he might find it necessary to pay Susan on account of the note.

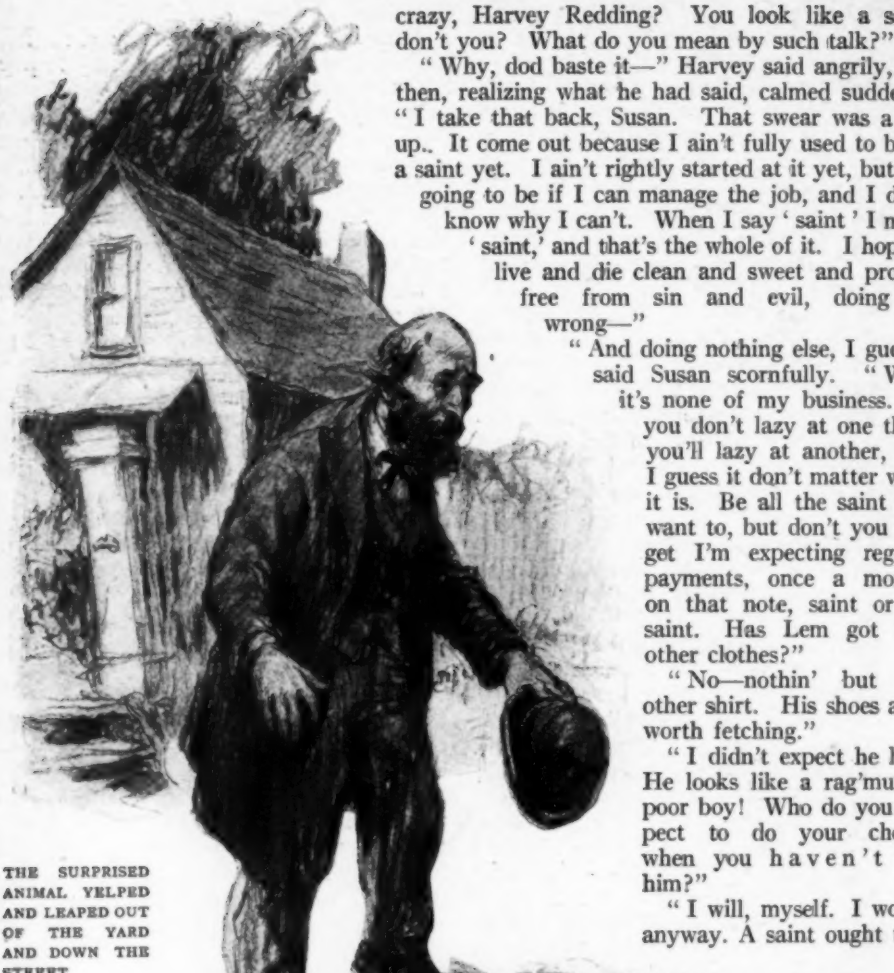
In many ways, as Harvey recognized, a small but regular income might be of great assistance to one who wished to be a first-class modern saint. Even Susan's demand that Lem should be left in pawn with her had its compensations; for while Harvey had not thought of Lem as a drawback, he realized now that since he was relieved of the care of Lem he was practically free from everything in the way of worldly ties.

While we may speak lightly of Harvey's announced intention, it must not be thought that he was taking up the life of a saint in any light spirit. He was most serious. Although the deeds of *Captain Collier* and *Dead-Eye Dick* had thrilled him, he had never seriously imagined himself becoming a detective or a bad man of the plains. He knew that he was not so constituted as to follow either career successfully. He felt that he did not have the necessary vigor. A saint, however, was something he felt himself peculiarly fitted to be.

In reading the book that had turned his thoughts toward sainthood, Harvey had admired the saints as fully and whole-heartedly as he had admired *Captain Collier* and other heroes; but he had, in addition, continually imagined himself in the place of the noble men of whom he was reading. He saw himself undergoing trials and tests and emerging triumphantly. He felt — as is true—that a saint is the greatest hero of all heroes, and the most deserving of praise, and the surest to receive worship and admiration.

Harvey did not admire all the saints in his book equally. He preferred the sweet-hearted, non-resisting type to that which went forth seeking trouble and martyrdom. The first suggestion of saintship in connection with himself came with the thought that it would be extremely pleasant to have nothing to do but be kind and good and gentle and sweet-tempered, doing no evil and thinking no evil. With about twenty-five dollars a month, a comfortable rocking-chair, a good-enough shack, and a sunny retreat in the former junk-yard, being a saint would be a pleasant job.

Later came the thought that it would be doubly pleasant to be known to all Riverbank, and in time to the whole world, as "the good St. Harvey of Riverbank." He



THE SURPRISED ANIMAL YELPED AND LEAPED OUT OF THE YARD AND DOWN THE STREET

feared that his fellow townsmen did not consider him of much importance now, that it rather scorned him; but if, by combining the austerity of a St. Anthony and the sweetness of a St. Francis of Assisi, he became known for his saintly qualities, there would be real tears shed when death came to claim him.

"Great land of goodness!" exclaimed Susan, when Harvey had spoken. "A saint! Are you going crazy, Harvey Redding? You look like a saint, don't you? What do you mean by such talk?"

"Why, dod baste it—" Harvey said angrily, and then, realizing what he had said, calmed suddenly. "I take that back, Susan. That swear was a slip up. It come out because I ain't fully used to being a saint yet. I ain't rightly started at it yet, but I'm going to be if I can manage the job, and I don't know why I can't. When I say 'saint' I mean 'saint,' and that's the whole of it. I hope to live and die clean and sweet and proper, free from sin and evil, doing no wrong—"

"And doing nothing else, I guess," said Susan scornfully. "Well, it's none of my business. If you don't lazy at one thing you'll lazy at another, and I guess it don't matter what it is. Be all the saint you want to, but don't you forget I'm expecting regular payments, once a month, on that note, saint or no saint. Has Lem got any other clothes?"

"No—nothin' but another shirt. His shoes ain't worth fetching."

"I didn't expect he had. He looks like a rag'muffin, poor boy! Who do you expect to do your chores when you haven't got him?"

"I will, myself. I would anyway. A saint ought to."

"Well, I don't know what a saint ought or oughtn't, but a boarding-house-keeper has to get supper the same one day as another," said Susan meaningly; "and now's when I begin, so I won't keep you any longer than need be. You get that money every first of the month, don't you?"

"Every fifteenth," said Harvey, taking up his hat.

"All right! If you ain't here with a share of it every sixteenth, you'll hear from me, and mighty clear hearing, too," said Susan. "If you want to say good-by to Lem, you can go out the front way."

Harvey went toward the kitchen door.

"It might set him off crying," he said. "That wouldn't be no use. Well, so-long, Susan."

"Good-by," she said, turning her back on him to look at her cookies.

"DON'T YOU OR YOUR DOG EVER COME INTO THIS YARD AGAIN, OR I'LL HANDLE YOU WORSE, A BIG SIGHT!"

Harvey went out. Any twinge of conscience he might have had because he was leaving Lem was lessened by the combined thought that Lem would be well cared for by Susan, and that it would be a great relief not to have to worry about him. From now on Harvey could give his time and his mind entirely to the job of being a saint, with nothing to annoy him.

As he walked down the hill, he considered the saint business from all sides. He walked more rapidly than was his custom, for he was eager to get home and begin being a saint. He meant to be gentle and kind, saying no harsh word, avoiding anger and profanity, eating little and drinking only pure, sparkling water, dressing simply, and doing good in a noble, unobtrusive way.

One matter that he had dwelt upon now and then, but had put aside as too difficult of solution while his mind was still occupied with a junkman's cares, now demanded attention. A saint must specialize. One point had made itself clear to Harvey while he was reading his "Lives of the Saints"—that it was not enough for a saint to *be* good; a saint must *do* something. For a while, vaguely, Harvey had thought he might take up the specialty of being kind to all children. Now this seemed unsuitable. A saint who began his career by shifting the care and keep of his own son to another could hardly expect to win praise by petting other children.

Somewhere between Susan's house and his own place the great solution came to him—stray dogs! The tender phrase, "Little Brother to Stray Dogs," formed itself in his mind as the one by which he would be known. He saw himself done in marble, after his regretted death, with a small, appealing dog in his arms, and a group of large, eager dogs at his feet, their eyes on his face. One of his hands would rest protectingly on the head of one of the dogs. He would be thin, of course. His long fasts and his diet of bread and water would fix that.

Riverbank would be quite able to furnish the stray dogs. There were more stray dogs in the town than could be counted. Since the city council had withdrawn the bonus of twenty-five cents per dog that had formerly given Dog Warden Schulig an active interest in dog-catching, Riverbank seemed to have become a haven for all the stray dogs in Iowa.

The junk-yard was a fine place in which to shelter stray dogs. It was quite possible that in time the rumor would get around that because of the purity of his heart, Harvey had come to understand dog language, and could converse with dogs as one man converses with another. He might even be able to do it.

Dod baste it all, he *would* be a saint! He would do the job proper. Harvey was eager to reach the junk-yard, make his final arrangements, and begin.

"The minute I get inside my gate!" he said to himself.

He turned the corner into Elm Street. He perspired with eagerness and haste. He reached the gate. He stopped there, looked up and down the street, and made a gesture of renunciation with his fat hands, like one putting aside the world forever.

Harvey pushed open the gate with something like solemnity, and stopped short. Moses Shuder was sitting on the step of the shanty, the skirts of his long, black coat dabbling in the dust, while his hands toyed with the ears of a spotted dog. Shuder looked up, his eyes appealing, as Harvey entered. He clasped his hands on his chest in the fashion that was one of his characteristics, and a meek smile wrinkled his face without relieving the anxiety that showed on his countenance.

"Misder Reddink," he said, arising.

Then Harvey saw that at his feet lay a large, roughly squared chunk of lead, of a weight of some thirty pounds. Harvey knew it well. It had been his last purchase as a junkman, Lem bringing it to the yard in company with two boys known to Harvey only as Swatty and Bony. The chunk of lead should not have been at Moses Shuder's feet; it should have been at the far end of the yard, where Lem had carried it.

"What you doin' with that hunk of lead?" Harvey demanded.

"Misder Reddink, please!" begged Shuder. "I want no trouble."

"Then you take that chunk o' lead back where you got it," said Harvey, his face flushing. "I don't sell you nothing. I don't sell nobody nothing. I'm out of this junk business—"

"Misder Reddink, please!" begged Moses Shuder, more meekly than before. "I do not ask you to sell. Only my rights I ask it of any man. It is my lead! Misder Reddink, please, I do not say you are a thief—"

"Well, dod baste you!" cried Harvey, swelling.

"Zhust a minute, please, Misder Reddink," begged Shuder. "Mit my own money I bought this lead, I assure you, and put it in my junk-yard, Misder Reddink, but that I should get you arrested I never so much as gave it a thought, Misder Reddink, believe me! Why should I, Misder Reddink? Do I blame you? No! If your boy stoled it from me—"

"What?" Harvey shouted, taking a step toward Shuder.

"Please, Misder Reddink! Should I say it if I did not see him with my own two eyes, climbing over my fence?"

"You're a liar!"

Shuder shrugged his shoulders.

"No, Misder Reddink; Rebecca could tell you the same story. I ain't sore, Misder Reddink. Boys would be boys, always. It is right I should watch my yard. But my lead is my lead, Misder Reddink. That your boy Lemuel should steal it from me is nothing; but I should have my lead back, Misder Reddink—sure!"

Shuder put his hands on the chunk of lead. At that moment a vast and uncontrollable rage filled Harvey, and he raised his fat hand and brought it down on Shuder's hat, crushing it over the little man's eyes. He grasped Shuder by the shoulders and ran him out of the yard, giving him a final push that sent him sprawling in the street.

"LEM IS GOING TO BE MY SWEETHEART, AREN'T YOU, LEM?" "I DON'T KNOW," SAID LEM, WITH A BOY'S DIFFIDENCE

Then, still raging, he turned while Shuder got to his feet. The spotted dog caught Harvey's eye. He drew back his foot and kicked the dog, and the surprised animal yelped and leaped out of the yard and down the street.

"There, dod baste you!" Harvey panted, shaking his fist at Shuder, who stood safely in the middle of the street. "That 'll show you! And don't you or your dog ever come into this yard again, or I'll handle you worse, a big sight!"

Moses Shuder looked at his damaged hat.

"Two dollars," he said, and shook his head sadly. "But I should complain! What you do to me and my hat the law will take care of, and my lead the law will take care of, if you want it that way, Mister Reddink; but that a man should kick a dog—"

"And I'll kick your dog out of this yard every time it comes in!" shouted Harvey.

Moses Shuder raised his hands.

"It is not my dog," he said. "It is a stray dog."

The saintly career of St. Harvey, the Little Brother to Stray Dogs, seemed to have begun inauspiciously.

IV

WHILE Lorna Percy was in Susan Redding's kitchen, acting as a witness to the compact that placed Lem Redding in pawn to his aunt for a period that seemed likely to be extended indefinitely, another lady had come down the front stairs, and, after greeting the young woman on the front porch, had occupied one of the chairs. This was Miss Henrietta Bates.

"I thought Lorna was here," she said. "Didn't I hear her voice?"

"Miss Susan called her into the kitchen," said the other. "I think she will be out in a moment."

Miss Henrietta held up an envelope.

"See what I've got!" she said, smiling.

"Not another letter from Bill?"

"Just that," said Henrietta. "And the dearest letter! There's a part I want to read to you and Lorna. I don't bore you with my Bill, do I, Gay?"

"Bore? What an idea!"

"Sometimes I'm afraid I do—if it wasn't that his letters are so intelligent. They don't seem to me like ordinary love-letters. They don't seem to you like the common wishy-washy stuff men write, do they?"

"Well, you know I have no experience in love-letters—"

"Poor Gay!" said Miss Bates, and laughed. "But I do think I'm fortunate in having a man like Bill choose me, don't you? I do wish he could come East this summer. I wish you and Lorna could meet him. He's so—so different from the men here!"

The three, who had become close friends, were school-teachers, and that was how two of them happened to be boarding at Miss Redding's, which was an exceptionally pleasant boarding-house. This was Lorna Percy's third year in the house, while Miss Bates had a year more to her credit. Gay Loring lived at home, across the street, with her parents.

In their quiet, small-town lives, the love-letters of Henrietta's William Vane had been important events. William was the first and only man to propose to any one of the three. Although Gay and Lorna had never seen him, they had seen his portrait and had heard a vast amount about him.

Henrietta spoke of her William Vane most frankly. She was evidently deeply in love with him, and Gay and Lorna were unequivocally glad on Henrietta's account.

Of Gay and Lorna it is enough to say here that they were still young and fresh and attractive. Of Henrietta it may be said that she was no longer quite young, but that she was still fresh and attractive. In many ways she was livelier than her two friends, and had equally youthful manners. Although she was at least forty, she had never taken to the type of garb that a woman dons when she is willing to advertise the fact that her youth has fled. Nor had Henrietta Bates any great reason to advertise any such loss. She was still vigorous and bright-eyed, not a gray hair was to be seen in her head, and her face was full and her complexion clear and pleasing.

When Lorna came from the kitchen, bringing young Lem, she noticed immediately the square envelope in Henrietta's hand.

"What, another?" she exclaimed eagerly. "Henrietta, you are the luckiest girl! What does Billy say this time?"

"I'm going to read part of the letter to you," said Henrietta. "Sit down and be a good girl and listen. Who is the young man? Isn't it Lemuel?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Lem shyly. "I'm Lem."

"He's going to live here now, too," said Lorna gaily; "aren't you, Lem?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"So you see!" said Lorna, seating herself on the steps and drawing Lem down beside her. "You may not be the only one with a sweetheart, Henrietta. Lem is going to be mine, aren't you, Lem?"

"I don't know," said Lem, with a boy's diffidence.

"Oh, you must not say that! You must say, 'I'd love to, Miss Percy.' Or, better yet, say, 'I'd love to, Lorna.' My name is Lorna. I'll call you Lem, and you'll call me Lorna—will you?"

"I don't care."

Gay erupted from her chair in a protesting billow of white and seated herself at Lem's other side.

"I'll not stand for this at all, Lorna Percy!" she complained. "You sha'n't kidnap him all for yourself. I have as much right to him as you have. You'll be my sweetheart, too, won't you, Lem?"

"Yes'm, I guess so."

"There, you mean thing!" Gay laughed at Lorna. "You see! He's as much mine as he is yours."

It was pretty play, and Lem did not mind it much. He had a boy's deep-grounded belief that all girls were silly, and these were only older girls.

"In this letter Bill says—" said Henrietta Bates.

Gay and Lorna turned their heads.

"Oh, excuse me, Henrietta!" Gay cried. "We are just crazy to hear what your Bill says, but having a really, truly sweetheart of our own is such a new experience—"

"STUPID DEARS! SO YOU HAVE FOUND ME OUT! IT HAS TAKEN YOU LONG ENOUGH, I'M SURE. I WONDER WHAT NEXT!"

"Come down on the steps and be comfy," added Lorna.

"No, I'll read it here," said Henrietta, and she opened the letter. "Well—there's part I can't read to you—"

"Of course!"

"And then he says, 'I thought of you a hundred times while on my fishing-trip. Some day you must learn to cast a fly, so we can make some of these trips together. You would be the best of companions.

And now, dearest girl, I want to ask you the most important question of all. Do you think you can make your preparations so that we can be married in August?' "

"In August!" exclaimed Gay. "I thought it was going to be impossible before next year, Etta!"

"It is a change in his plans," said Henrietta. "Shall I read the rest?"

"Do, please," said Gay.

"Yes, indeed," said Lorna.

"'I'm asking this, dear,' he goes on," said Henrietta, "'because I have just had most wonderful news. I'm to be sent to Africa. A big job—the biggest I ever had. It is a wonderful country, and I want you to enjoy it with me. It is too far to go without you; so it must be an August wedding, because we must sail in September.' "

"Henrietta! How grand!" Gay cried.

"Isn't it?" Henrietta agreed. "Africa, girls! Just think of it! Am I not the luckiest thing?"

"Think of it, young Lemuel," Lorna said. "Her sweetheart is going to marry her and carry her off to Africa, where the lions are. You see what I shall expect of you, young man. The very least you can do is to get ready to carry me off to Europe."

"And me to Asia," said Gay.

Lem said nothing. He knew they were teasing.

"And listen to this, girls," Henrietta continued. "'You'll forgive me, Etta dear, for asking you to agree to such an early wedding. I know it will find you unprepared, and you must let your crude lover do the unconventional this once. I want you to tell me I can send you a few of my miserable dollars—ten hundred, let us say, so they may be made happy dollars by aiding your preparations.' "

Henrietta folded the letter.

"What do you think of that, Gay?" she asked. "Should I let him? Would it be right?"

"Of course! Why not, under the circumstances?" Gay answered.

"When he asked you to go so far and so soon," said Lorna.

"I hoped you would say so," said Henrietta. "I only wanted your approval. You know what it means to me. It will let me use what I have saved—the money I would never touch—and I can pay you both all I owe you, and what I owe Miss Susan. It makes everything so much easier for me. And of course you'll help me get ready; I'll have so much to do!"

"As if we weren't mad to," said Gay. "You must write him at once, Henrietta, and tell him it is all right."

"I'm going right up-stairs to do it this minute," Henrietta answered.

She went into the house, humming happily. Gay looked at Lorna quizzically. Lorna laughed.

"What do you think of it now?" Gay asked in a low tone. "Did you notice? She would not come down to the step to read the letter."

"I did notice. And did you see the ink-spot on the back of the envelope? The same spot that was on it when she read the last letter from her William, and the one before that?"

"Yes, I did notice. I'm positive it is the same envelope. I believe you are right; I believe she does write the letters to herself. Isn't it funny? Isn't it amazing?"

"Or sad, or something," Lorna said. "Gay, what do you think of it, really? What does it mean?"

"Did she try to borrow some money from you this morning?" Gay asked.

"Yes, twenty-five dollars, but I did not have it."

"I did have twenty. She got that," Gay said, and giggled.

"Then you'll see! She'll get another present from her dear William to-morrow," Lorna said. "Isn't it just as I said—every time she borrows from us she gets a present from dear William? You'll see. It will be something worth about twenty dollars. Say, Gay!"

"Yes?"

"You know I said I did not believe her William was really engaged to her at all?"

"Yes?"

"Well, I don't believe there *is* any William. I don't believe he exists. I think Henrietta made him up entirely. I believe she invented him."

"Oh, lovely!" Gay cooed. "Isn't she wonderful? But why, Lorna? Why should she?"

"That's what I've been wondering. Not just to get money from us, because she uses it to buy the presents she says her William sends. She has no need to buy presents for her William to send. We would believe in her William quite as easily without the presents."

"Isn't it exciting?" Gay cooed again.

"Well, *I* never knew anything like it, I'll say that," agreed Lorna. "When you think of the trouble she has gone to, and how she has kept it up. Gay, do you think she has any idea we don't believe her?"

"Of course she hasn't! But isn't it the strangest thing for anybody to do?"

"I don't know," said Lorna thoughtfully. "I've been thinking about it a lot since I first had a suspicion, and it isn't really so strange. You know what Henrietta is like. She loves to shine. She hates to play second fiddle. Do you remember when we first heard of her dear Billy?"

"When she was at Spirit Lake, where she said she met him. She wrote about the engagement from there."

"Yes," said Lorna, "and do you remember what was going on here in Riverbank just before she went on vacation?"

"I don't remember."

"Don't tell me you don't remember how Carter Bruce was rushing you then!" scoffed Lorna. "Henrietta and I agreed that you and Carter would be engaged before the summer ended."

"Oh, Carter Bruce!" admitted Gay. "Of course, he was fussing around. He is always fussing around—or was."

"Yes, and we thought he was going to steal you, Gay. Well, that's the answer!"

"You mean—"

"Of course! Henrietta just couldn't stand having you engaged when she was not; so she invented Billy Vane while she was at Spirit Lake, and told us he had gone out to Colorado, where he would be out of the way."

"But who writes her the letters from Colorado?"

"How do I know? She may have a brother out there. That is easy. She would have dear Bill go wherever there was some one who could write her a letter now and then; and Henrietta does the rest. It isn't so impossible when you think of it that way, is it? After she had invented dear Bill, it was natural enough that she should keep him alive, when we were so interested."

"Lorna, it is the greatest thing I ever heard of!" exclaimed Gay. "And I think you are a wizard to discover the truth."

"No, I'm not," said Lorna. "Just think back, Gay. The strange thing is that we did not hit on it sooner. Think! Can't you remember a hundred things that should have made us suspicious?"

"Yes," Gay admitted. "Especially the presents, and the way she borrows just before the presents come."

"And never letting us see a single letter, and always moving away when we come near her when she is reading them to us, and never getting another photograph from Billy—and a thousand things."

"Yes," said Gay again. "Are you going to do anything about it?"

"Do? No; why should I? If she enjoys it, I'm sure we do. Only—we must not lend her any more, if we can help it. There's no reason why we should lend her our hard-earned money to buy presents for herself with."

Gay giggled.

"How much does she owe you now?" she asked.

"Almost two hundred."

"And me over one hundred and fifty! Isn't it rich?"

"It's peachy!"

In her own room, Henrietta Bates was looking at her comely face reflected in her mirror. She was pleased with it, and she glanced down at the three framed photographs on her dresser. One was the picture of the imaginary William Vane, the others were of her dearest friends — Gay and Lorna. To William's portrait she gave only a careless glance. She lingered over Gay's and Lorna's.

"Stupid dears!" she thought. "So you have found me out! It has taken you long enough, I'm sure. I wonder what next!"

V

As Lorna Percy, Lem Redding, and Gay Loring sat on the porch, a jaunty straw hat came into view above the terrace. When it reached the gate, it proved to be on the head of a man as jaunty as the hat. The man paused at the gate to look up the street.

"There's Freeman," said Lorna. "He's home early."

"Not so very. It is getting toward supper-time," Gay answered. "I'd better be getting home to help mother set the table."

"Poor excuse!" teased Lorna. "But run along, if you want to have a nice little session at the gate all by your lonies. Gay—"

"Yes?"

"I *do* think Freeman is in love with you."

Gay colored.

"Why?" she asked.

"The way he acts, and everything. Don't you think so yourself?"

"Well, he's persistent enough. He's never said anything outright—not anything much. I don't know whether he loves me or just wants to see how far he can go, Lorna."

Lorna was silent a moment.

"I'd say I was glad, if he wasn't so—you know, Gay — flashy. Don't you think he is rather flashy? He's fast, too. I'd rather have you like Carter Bruce."

"For all I know, he's a thousand miles from thinking anything serious," Gay answered. "I'm simply not going to take him seriously until he is serious."

"How old do you suppose he really is?"

"Twenty - five. Don't you think so?"

"I doubt it, Gay. He may be. It is hard to judge. He's queer. I don't like him. He *is* queer sometimes. He—"

"Sh!" warned Gay, indicating Lem, who was listening to their talk with all his ears.

"I forgot. You're such a quiet little boy," she said to Lem. "Are you a little pitcher with big ears?"

"Yes'm," said Lem. "I guess so."

"What I meant," said Lorna to Gay, "was l-i-q-u-o-r. Have you suspected it?"

"Ellicker!" said Lem. "What's that mean?"

"Hush, Gay!" said Lorna. "I see him coming in."

Freeman Todder, the young man of whom they were speaking, climbed the terrace steps slowly. He carried a cane, which was an unusual bit of dandyism in Riverbank, and he was what Miss Redding called "dressy."

Very few young fellows in Riverbank were "dressy," and almost none of the older men. Seldom or never were trousers creased on weekdays, for the "Sunday suit" held sway on the Sabbath and at parties and dances. To be well dressed on a weekday was almost a sign of ungodliness, because the few who were well dressed were certainly apt to be ungodly. They were thought to be interested in poker, woman, and wine.

PEOPLE WONDERED HOW FREEMAN TODDER COULD LIVE AND DRESS ON WHAT JOHNNY ALBERSON PAID HIM

Freeman Todder, when he arrived in Riverbank, had almost immediately affiliated himself with the dozen "dressy" young fellows. He was seen in Alberson's drug-store, in the Smokorium in front of Weltschaffel's clothing-store, and wherever the young bucks gathered. It was said that his first labors in Riverbank were in the nature of holding a handful of playing-cards in Alberson's back room, in company with a number of other young fellows; and it was some time before he found a job. The job he found was serving soda-water in Alberson's store. In the winter, when the soda trade was slack, he was behind Alberson's cigar-counter.

People wondered how Freeman Todder could live and dress on what Johnny Alberson paid him. Some guessed that Freeman "knocked down" some of the change that passed through his hand, but those who knew Johnny Alberson best did not believe that. None who knew Johnny ever be-

lieved he would let even a penny that belonged to him go astray.

That Freeman could dress as he did and board at Miss Redding's—which was not the cheapest place in Riverbank—and have silver dollars to clink in his pocket, and do it on what Alberson paid, was manifestly impossible. The answer that most of those who thought they were knowing gave was "poker." Even the other "dressy" youths confirmed this.

Freeman played a careful game, not a showy one, and did win now and then. No one ever bothered to foot up his gains and compare them with his losses. As a matter of fact, his net poker winnings would not have paid for his showy shirts, the gaily striped cuffs of which always showed liberally below his coat-sleeves.

As he came up the walk toward the two girls on Miss Redding's porch steps, he raised his hat, and then let it hang in his hand.

"Hello, one and all!" he said. "Who's the young gent you have clamped between you there?"

"This is Lem," said Lorna. "Lem's going to be among those present here after this, aren't you, Lem?"

"Yes'm," said Lem, and then to Freeman: "What's 'ellicker'?"

"Now hush, Lem!" said Lorna.

"Well, I want to know. What is it?" Lem insisted. "It's about *you*," he said, looking up at Freeman. "*She* said it. She said she expected it about you."

Lorna reddened with embarrassment. Freeman Todder's eyes narrowed for an instant; then he smiled.

"I expect it is something devilish, then, son," he said; "but it's probably not half as bad as the truth. You'll learn that, if you associate with this wicked man long. I'm a horrible example—that's right, Gay? They'll take you by the hand, Lem, and point at me and say, 'See that man? Beware! Do not be like him. He is a lost soul. He uses cigarettes and blows the smoke through his nose!'"

"Hah! I can do that!" scoffed Lem.

"You're both of you wicked men, then," said Gay, lightly.

Lorna took Lem's hand.

"Come around the house with me," she said. "I want you to help me pick a lot of syringas for Gay."

She dragged Lem away. Freeman seated himself beside Gay.

Freeman Todder was not twenty-five, but something hard in his face and eyes made him look older at times. His face was thin and rather narrow, and his mouth was like a healed wound, so thin were his lips. He did not have much chin. He did not look wholesome. He looked unsafe and cruel.

"L-i-q-u-o-r," he spelled, and looked at Gay and laughed. "C-a-r-d-s. Also, d-i-c-e. I'm a regular Satan with horns and hoofs, ain't I?"

"Oh, Freeman!" she said reproachfully. "Don't be sarcastic. We were only—"

"Only talking me over. Well, that's something, anyway. That's a sort of flattery."

He laid his cane across his knees.

"You *have* been drinking, Freeman," Gay said.

"Yes, I've had a couple too many. Do you know how I feel? Like this—whoops!" He flung his hat off to the left on the lawn. "Whoops!" He threw his cane to the right.

"Ah!" exclaimed Gay, as if he had intentionally hurt her. "Why do you do it, Freeman?"

Freeman spread out his hand on his knee and looked at his fingers one by one, raising each in turn. On one finger he wore a large, flashy ring. He moved the finger so that the light flashed from the facets of the stone. Suddenly he looked into the girl's eyes.

"Keep away from me, Gay," he said seriously. "I'm no good. I'm warning you, understand? Don't have anything to do with me. I'm bad business. I like you, but I'm bad business."

"But, Freeman—"

"Not yet. You can 'But, Freeman,' me all you like when I get through, but this is my hiss, this is the rattle of my snake-buttons. You keep away from me! I'm bad for you, and I'm saying so now because after this I won't care a damn. This is my warning. After this you'll have to look out for yourself. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Yes, but I know that you don't really mean it."

"I do mean it. I'm warning you. If you know what is good for you, you'll never speak to me or let me speak to you again. Once! Twice! Third and last warning! Warned!"

He waited a moment. When he spoke

again, it was no longer seriously, but in his usual flippant tone.

"Who is the Lem kid?" he asked.

"Miss Redding's nephew. His father left him here a while ago. And—what do you think? Henrietta's Bill has set the wedding-day. I'm so glad for Henrietta! She has always been so sweet about waiting for him."

It was evident that Gay had not taken Freeman's warning as seriously as she might have taken it. Freeman raised his eyebrows with an effect like that of shrugging one's shoulders. He had warned her, and seriously, and that was more than he need have done.

"That so?" he said indifferently, referring to Henrietta. "Henrietta and her Bill give me a pain."

"Why? Do you know anything about them?" asked Gay eagerly.

"I? No. Why should I?"

"Haven't you ever suspected anything?" asked Gay.

Freeman turned and looked into the girl's eyes.

"What do you suspect, Gay?" he inquired, as if the whole matter interested him very little.

"Well, we may be doing her the most awful injustice," Gay said, "but Lorna and I have been wondering if there *is* a Bill. We wonder if Henrietta isn't just pretending there is a Billy Vane—and all."

Freeman still seemed more bored than interested.

"Why should she pretend a thing like that—a crazy thing like that?" he asked indifferently.

"Don't you know how girls love to wear rings on their engagement fingers?" asked Gay. "It's that sort of thing, Lorna and I think. It gives her a romantic hue. She thinks it makes us feel she is fortunate. Isn't it killing?"

Freeman looked at the ants scurrying across the walk at his feet.

"I don't know anything about it," he said. "You girls may have seen a lot I never saw. You wouldn't think of such a thing unless you had some reason. How about all the presents she says he sends her?"

"We think she buys them herself," Gay said.

Freeman turned his hand and looked at his long, well-kept nails.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked.

"Indeed, yes!"

"Do you remember the silver-backed hand-mirror Billy Vane sent her, with her monogram engraved on it?"

"Yes."

"All right! Johnny Alberson ordered that for her from Chicago. I saw it when it came, and I saw her when she came into the store to pay the bill."

"Why, Freeman Todder! And just this minute you said you didn't know anything about it!"

"About there being no Billy Vane," he explained. "There might be a Billy Vane who did not do his duty in the way of presents. He might be a close-fist. Your Henrietta might be afraid you would think he was a cheap skate if presents did not come along regularly."

Gay considered this.

"Yes," she said, after a moment, "that might be, but we suspected there was no Billy before we thought of the presents at all. Of course, the presents she has to buy explain why she never has any money—why she is always borrowing; but that is not all. You won't say a word, will you, Freeman?"

"No. It don't interest me at all," he said.

Miss Redding, rosy-cheeked, came to the door then, and tinkled a small supper-bell. Gay Loring, with an exclamation, jumped up and went to find Lorna Percy and Lem and the promised flowers, and Freeman Todder picked up his hat and cane. He hung the hat on the rack in the hall, set his cane in the umbrella-jar, and then climbed the stairs.

As he reached the top, Henrietta Bates's door opened and she came out. They met just outside her door, and she slipped something into his hand.

"There's twenty dollars," she said in a whisper. "It is all I could get. I can't borrow any more. They are suspicious now."

"But, my God, Et!" whispered Freeman Todder angrily. "Twenty dollars isn't going to do me any good!"

"It's the most I could get," said Henrietta shortly.

She hurried down the stairs to greet Lorna and Lem with the smiling face of a woman whose lover has just set the happy day.

(*To be continued in the May number of* MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

The New Era in Palestine

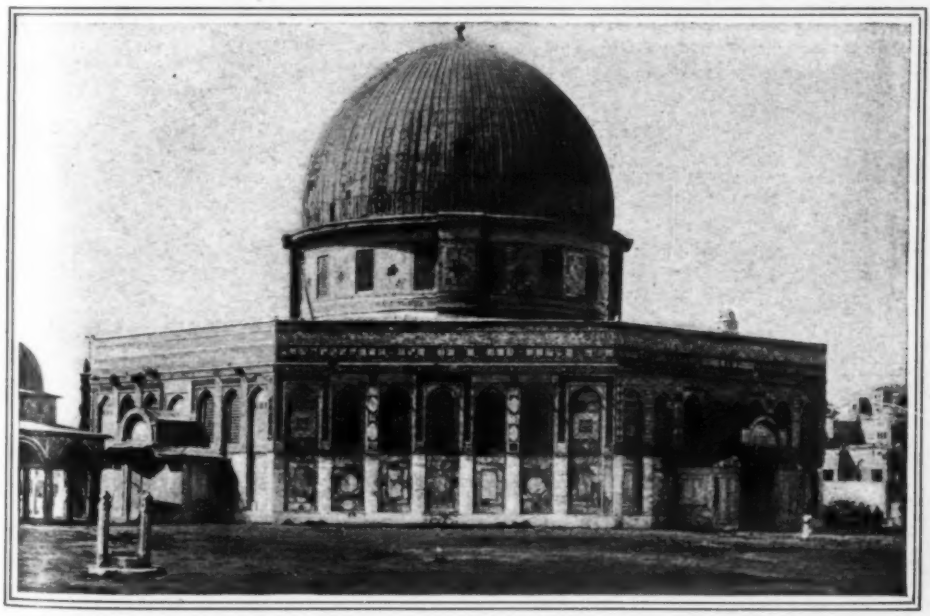
THE BEGINNING OF A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY ON WHICH FOR AGES SO MUCH OF THE INTEREST OF THE WORLD HAS CENTERED AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF CHRISTIANITY, THE RACIAL HOME OF THE JEW, AND A HOLY LAND TO THE MOHAMMEDAN WHOSE RULE OVER IT HAS BEEN ENDED BY THE GREAT WAR

By Frederic Austin Ogg

Professor of Political Science in the University of Wisconsin

As a result of the war, five new states have taken their places on the map of that portion of the world formerly known as Asiatic Turkey. These five are the kingdom of the Hedjaz, bordering the Red Sea and stretching inland indefinitely; the republic of Armenia, still undelimited, but nominally embracing both the Russian and the Turkish territories of that name; Syria, including the province of Aleppo; Mesopotamia, comprising the three rich provinces of Mosul, Bagdad, and Basra; and Palestine.

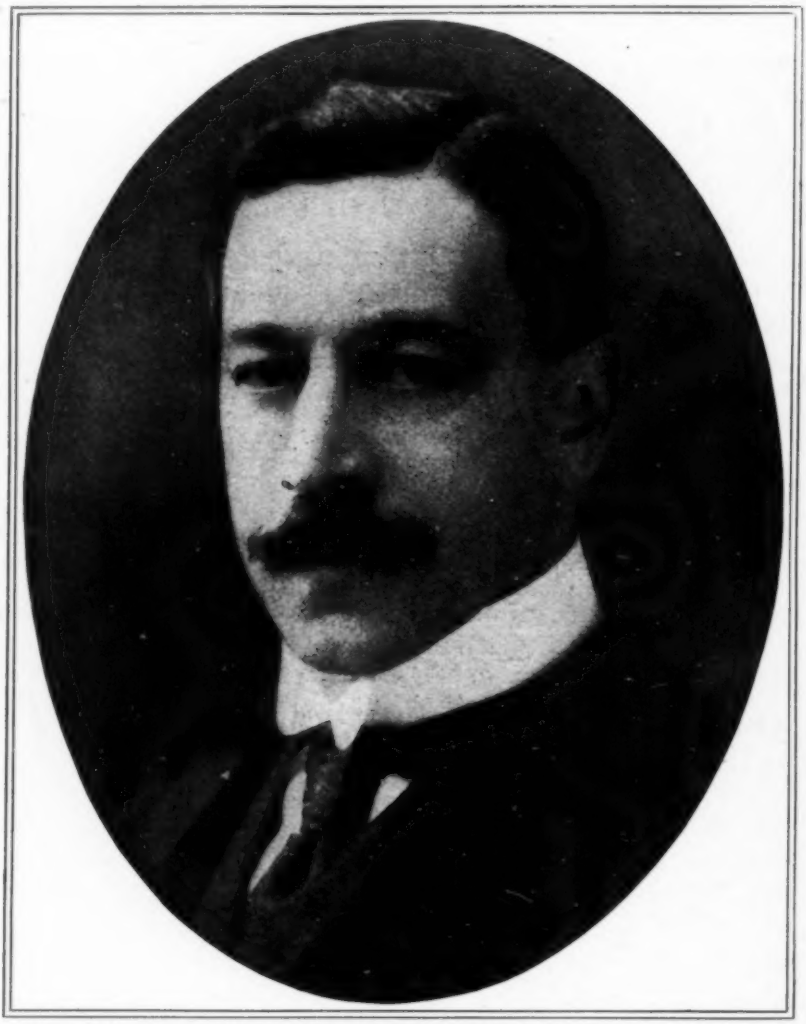
The first and second have been recognized by the victorious European powers as completely independent, although the effort is still being made to find a nation willing to assume a mandate for the protection of luckless Armenia. The third, by agreement reached at the San Remo conference last April, has been put under the tutelage of France. The fourth and fifth



THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, OR DOME OF THE ROCK, BUILT AFTER THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM BY THE ARABS (A.D. 637)—UNDER THE DOME IS THE SACRED ROCK WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE SITE OF THE ALTAR OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

have been similarly turned over, for purposes of administrative supervision, to Great Britain.

Much history is going to be made in this part of the world in the next ten years. Shrewd observers, indeed, are predicting that here will center the main issues of peace and war. The mandatory system is not without attractiveness, but it bristles with difficulties, and it is likely to be productive of disputes. Already the French have been compelled to fight their way into the control of Syria; while the British operations in Mesopotamia, in addition to meeting strenuous local resistance, have been made the subject of international inquiries and warnings.



SIR HERBERT SAMUEL, BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN PALESTINE—SIR HERBERT WAS BORN IN LIVERPOOL, OF JEWISH PARENTAGE, IN 1870, AND WAS FORMERLY POSTMASTER-GENERAL IN THE ASQUITH CABINET

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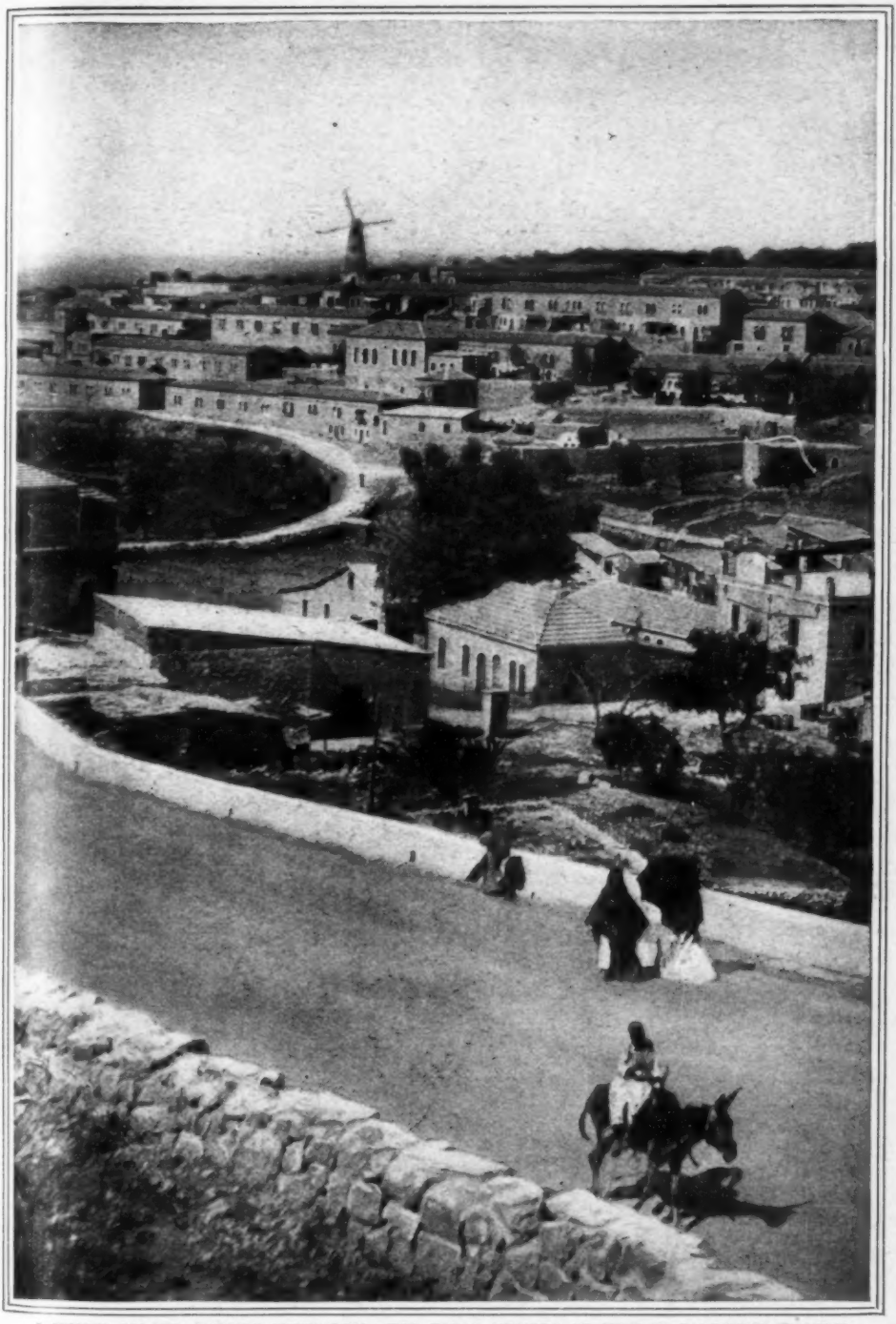
The phase of the Near Eastern settlement which for the present, at all events, interests the world most deeply is the new British position in Palestine.

To the Christian, Palestine is the Holy Land, scene of the Messianic life and death, original seat of the church. To the Mos-



A JEWISH COLONY OUTSIDE JERUSALEM — THE TOTAL NUMBER OF JEWS IN PALESTINE IS ONLY ABOUT ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND, AS AGAINST FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND ARABS, BUT THE JEWS REPRESENT THE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENT IN THE POPULATION

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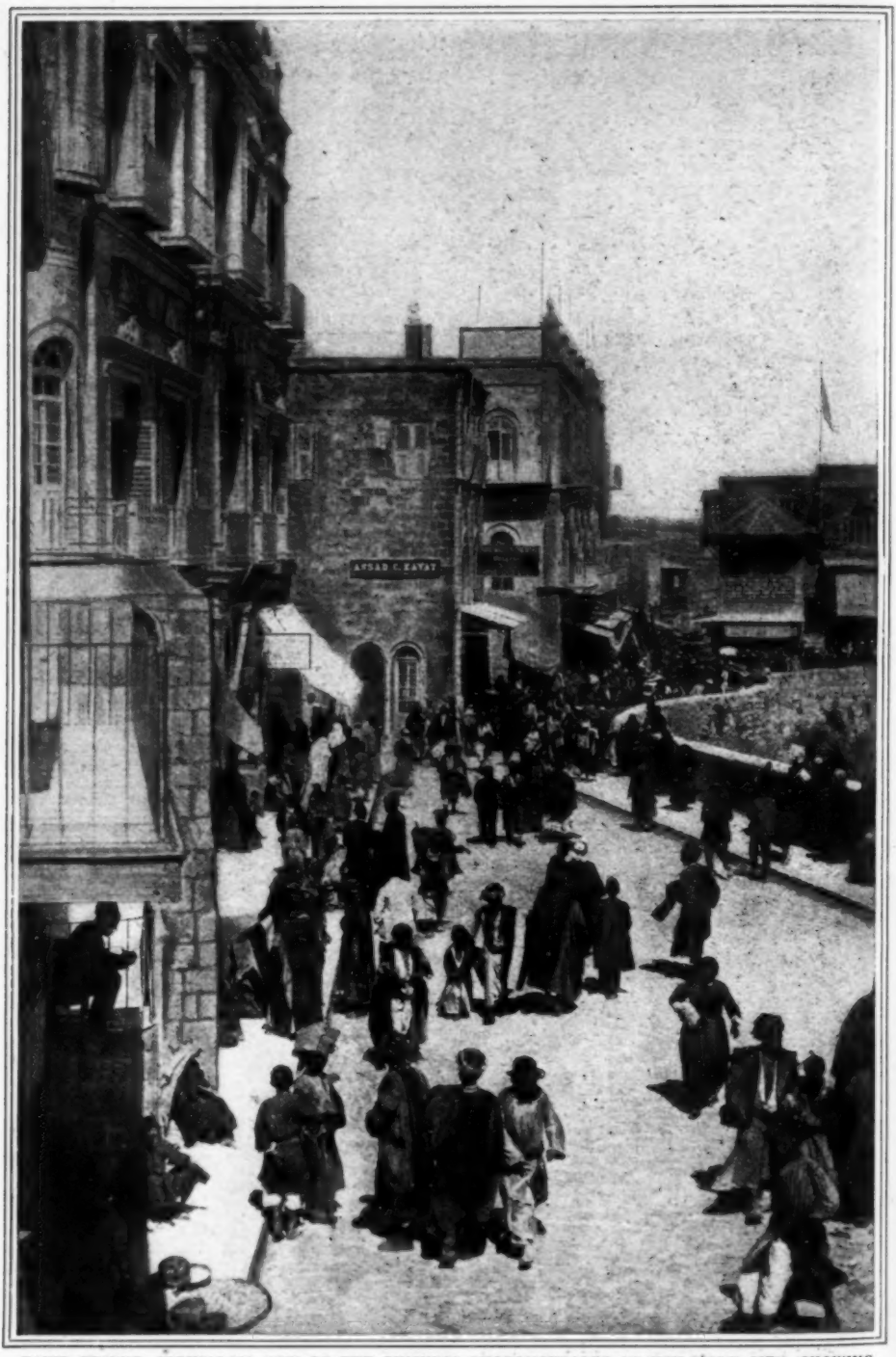

DAVID STREET, JERUSALEM, ONE OF THE BUSINESS THOROUGHFARES OF THE HOLY CITY, SHOWING THE COSMOPOLITAN MIXTURE OF PEDESTRIANS THAT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF MODERN JERUSALEM

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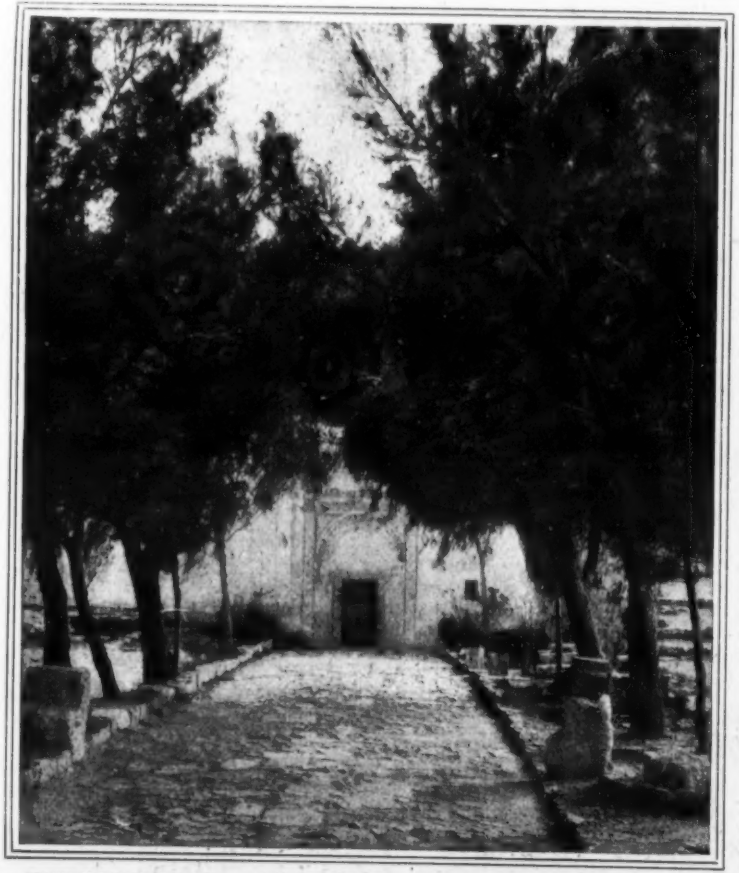
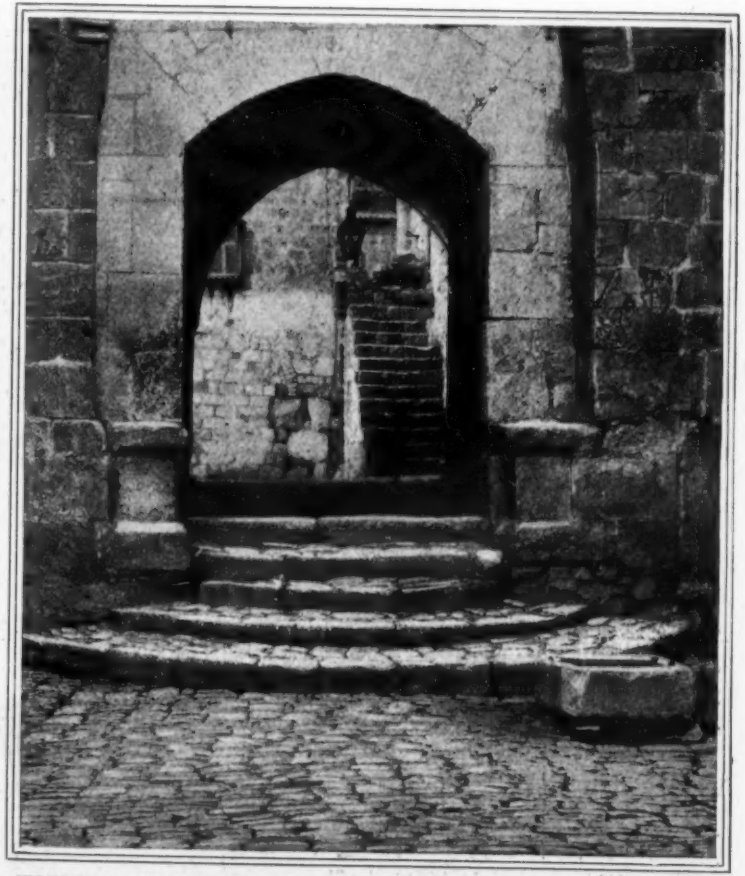
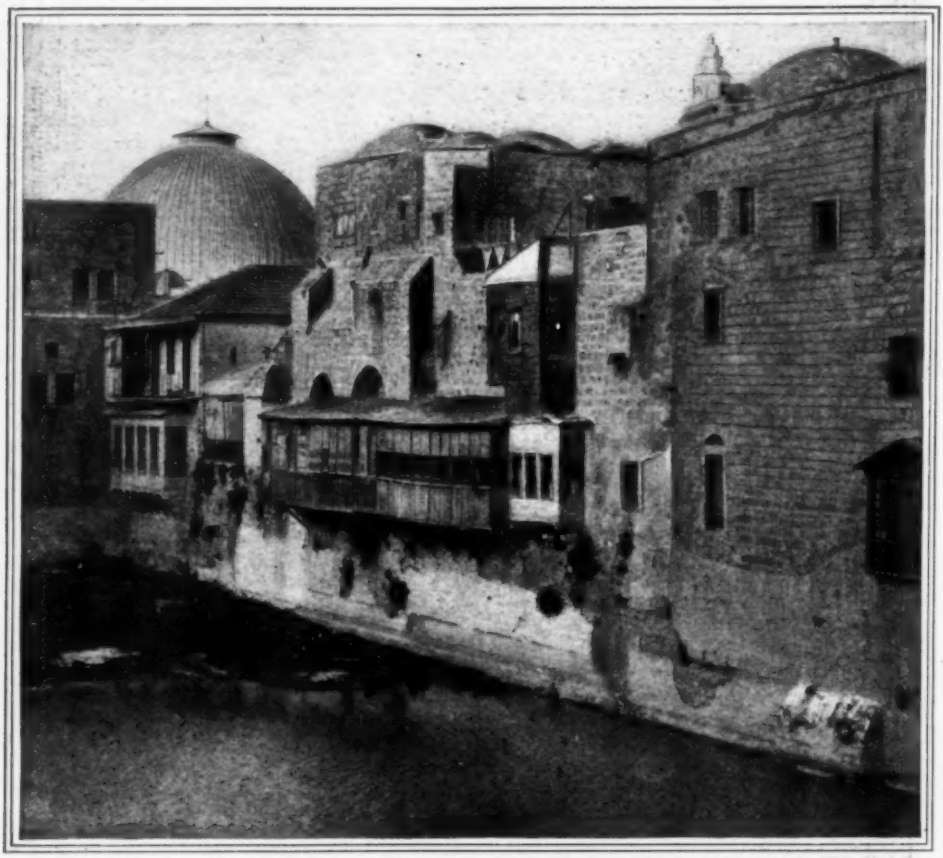


JERUSALEM—THE OLD HOUSE WHICH TRADITION IDENTIFIES AS THE SCENE OF CHRIST'S LAST SUPPER WITH HIS DISCIPLES



JERUSALEM—THE APPROACH TO THE COURT WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE SCENE OF CHRIST'S EXPULSION OF THE MONEY-CHANGERS FROM THE TEMPLE

lem, it is also a holy land, in which the great prophets who preceded Mohammed walked and talked. To the Jew it is holy land, haven, home. Even if the country did not stand at the gateway of East and West—at a vantage-point in the great game of international politics—its passing from one controlling authority to another would be everywhere observed with very special feeling, whether of pleasure or regret.

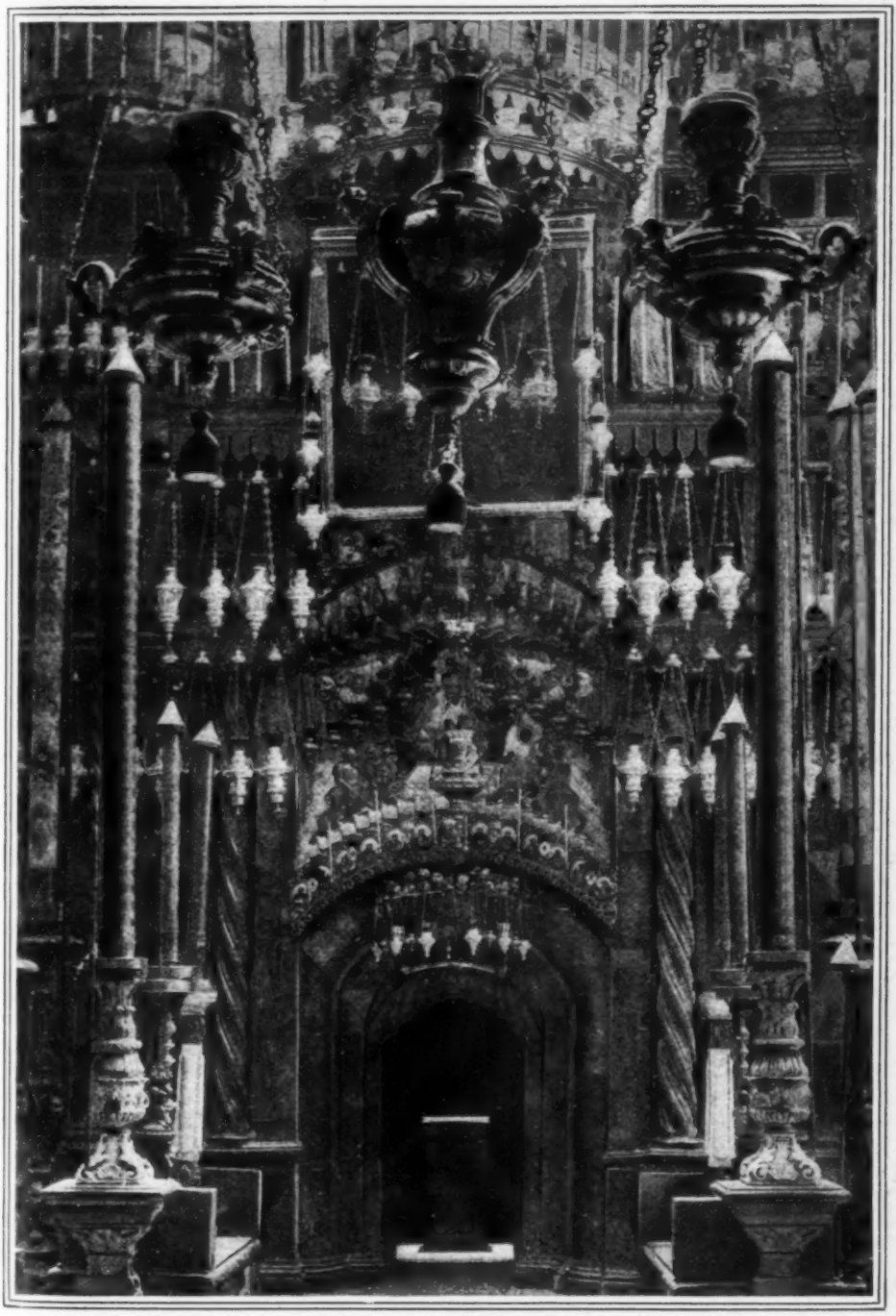


JERUSALEM—THE POOL OF HEZEKIAH, SAID TO DATE FROM THE TIME WHEN KING HEZEKIAH "MADE A POOL AND A CONDUIT, AND BROUGHT WATER INTO THE CITY"—IN THE BACKGROUND IS THE DOME OF THE MOSQUE OF OMAR

The territory for which Great Britain has accepted responsibility comprises the old Turkish sanjak of Jerusalem and portions of the provinces of Beirut and Syria. It is substantially the size of New Jersey, or of Wales, and it has a present population of about seven hundred thousand. This population is very mixed. In the main, it is Arab, and Arab is the language commonly spoken; but there are many Jews, besides Europeans of divers nationalities. On the other hand, there are practically no Turks.

Physically, the country resembles southern California. Contour and soil vary enormously, however, within very limited spaces. Deep fissures, running both north and south and east and west, cut the land, gridiron fashion, into little areas, which range all the way from the rocky plateau of Judæa to the low-lying and fruitful Galilee and Bashan. In general, the soil is good, the climate excellent, and the rainfall adequate. Once a land "flowing with milk and honey," it could again be made a productive and prosperous country if only capital, labor, scientific direction, and good government were supplied.

No reader of history needs to be told how checkered have been the country's for-



JERUSALEM—INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, MARKING THE TRADITIONAL SITE OF THE ENTOMBMENT OF CHRIST—THE EARLIEST CHURCH HERE WAS BUILT BY CONSTANTINE THE GREAT; THE PRESENT STRUCTURE DATES FROM THE CRUSADES (1140-1168) WITH MANY SUBSEQUENT RESTORATIONS

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tunes. Only twice before has it formed a separate state—first under the Jews, and later, for less than a hundred years, as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, set up by the medieval crusaders. During all the remaining centuries it has been immersed in one great empire or another — Hittite, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, Sassanian, Byzantine, Arab, Mameluke, Turkish—and shall we now add, British?

From first to last it lay on or near the world's great pathways of empire. Only for short intervals has the tread of the soldier been silenced in its borders.

PALESTINE'S ALIEN RULERS

The country's latest and harshest alien master was the Turk, whose rule extended over a period of almost exactly four hundred years. Established as a result of the defeat of the Mameluke sultan of Egypt in 1515, Turkish control was at first surprisingly moderate, and even beneficent. Solyman the Magnificent, within a generation after the conquest, gave the Jewish population full civil liberty, and expended large sums in restoring buildings and in other public improvements. Later emperors, however, were less enlightened, and for three hundred years government was almost uniformly bad. Extortionate taxes were wrung from the impoverished peasantry; corruption and waste staggered the occasional reformer; resources lay undeveloped; the arts and industries fell into decay.

Long before the Turkish era the country ceased to be Jewish, except in a historical and sentimental sense. Twice, indeed, in its earlier history it was literally emptied of its Hebrew population. On the first occasion—the Assyrian and Chaldean conquests of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.—the "captivity" did not last long; but the second break-up brought a permanent dispersion.

This greater exile began with the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor Titus in the year 70 A.D. It was completed when, sixty-five years afterward, the Emperor Hadrian crushed a rebellion, turned Jerusalem into a Roman colony, built a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Holy Sepulcher, and forbade any Jew, on pain of death, to come within seeing distance of the city.

A handful of people of Jewish nationality did, indeed, linger in the northern part of the country, devoting themselves to legal and religious studies, and living from alms contributed by their coreligionists in other lands. After the rigor of Roman rule was relaxed, increasing, though never large, numbers of the exiles' descendants drifted back; but the bulk of the Hebrew people have ever lived elsewhere. Torn from the soil, persecuted, driven from place to place, segregated, and preyed upon by covetous governments, they turned to trading as the most available mode of earning a livelihood; and as merchants and financiers they gradually gained the reputation for sharpness and cupidity which they not altogether justly bear to-day.

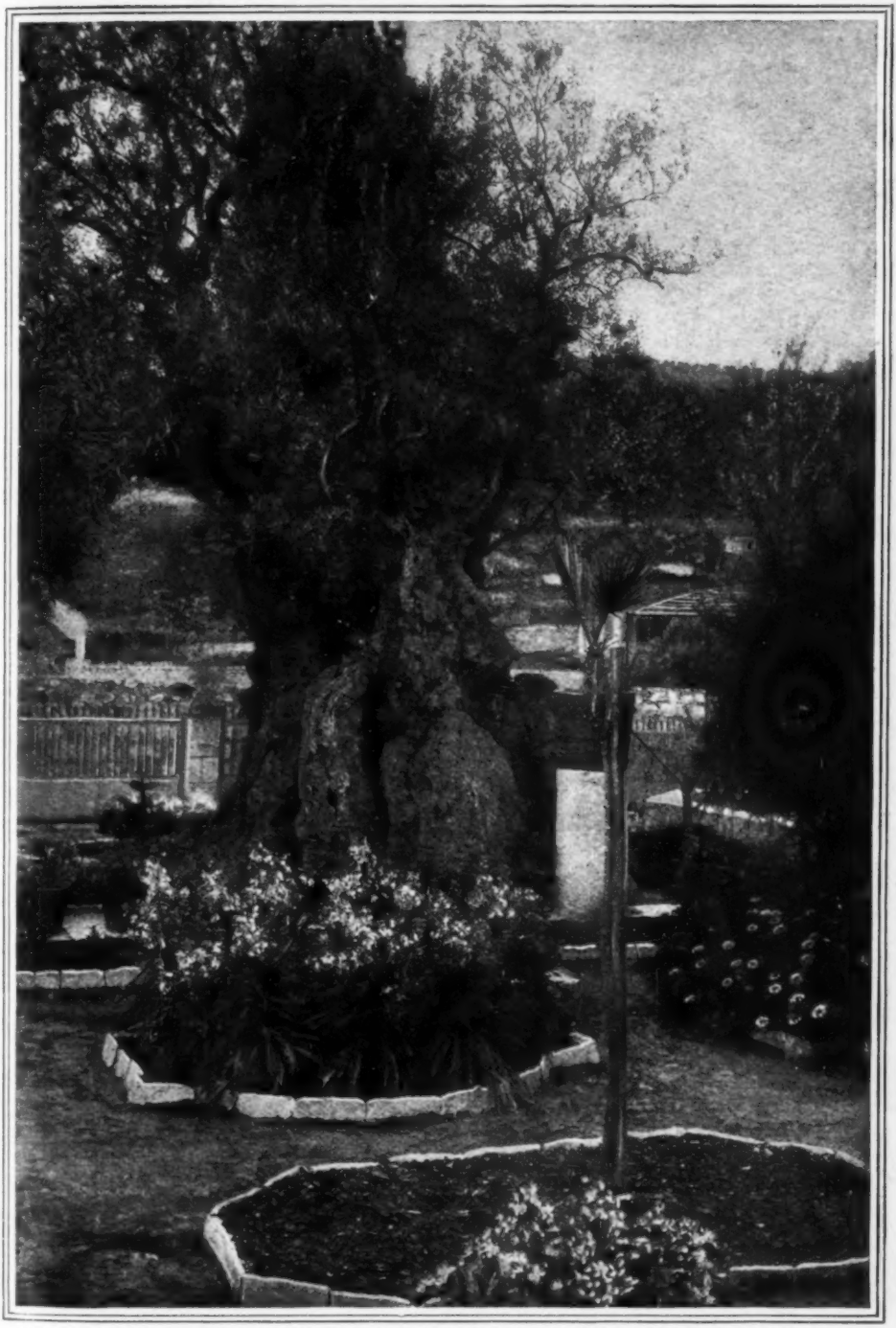
At the outbreak of the great war there were more than twelve million Jews in the world. Half of the number lived in Russia, including Russian Poland. A quarter lived in the United States. One-sixth lived in Germany and Austria-Hungary. The remainder were scattered in every land and clime. Palestine itself contained not more than one hundred thousand.

THE MOVEMENT FOR A JEWISH STATE

A considerable portion of this wide-flung Jewish population was prosperous and quite content with its lot; but large numbers were less fortunate, being the victims of anti-Semitic prejudice, restrictive laws, "pogroms," and other forms of persecution. Among these elements the hope of revival of a great Jewish state in Palestine, in which all the scattered sons of Israel could find a haven, was never given up.

In earlier times a Messiah was looked for, who should lead his people back into the chosen land. As late as the seventeenth century the entire Jewish world was stirred by the claim of a certain Sabbatai Zevi to be such a savior. In later times, however, it was realized that if Palestine was again to be made a Jewish state, the thing would have to be done through the arduous and prosaic methods of colonization, diplomatic negotiation, and perchance war. Even before 1914, important steps were taken on these lines.

Systematic colonization began not more than forty years ago, and was undertaken mainly with a view to relieving the oppressed Jews of Russia. Somewhat earlier than this, however, Jewish colonization societies had been organized in England and other western countries, and isolated colo-



THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, ABOUT THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE FROM JERUSALEM, TRADITIONALLY THE SCENE OF THE AGONY OF CHRIST ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS PASSION—THE ANCIENT OLIVE-TREE IN THE ENGRAVING IS SAID TO HAVE EXISTED AT THAT TIME

THE SO-CALLED TOMB OF THE PROPHETS, ON THE HILL OF THE PROPHETS, THE SOUTHERN SPUR OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, WHICH LIES EAST OF JERUSALEM, SEPARATED FROM THE CITY BY THE VALLEY AND BROOK OF KIDRON

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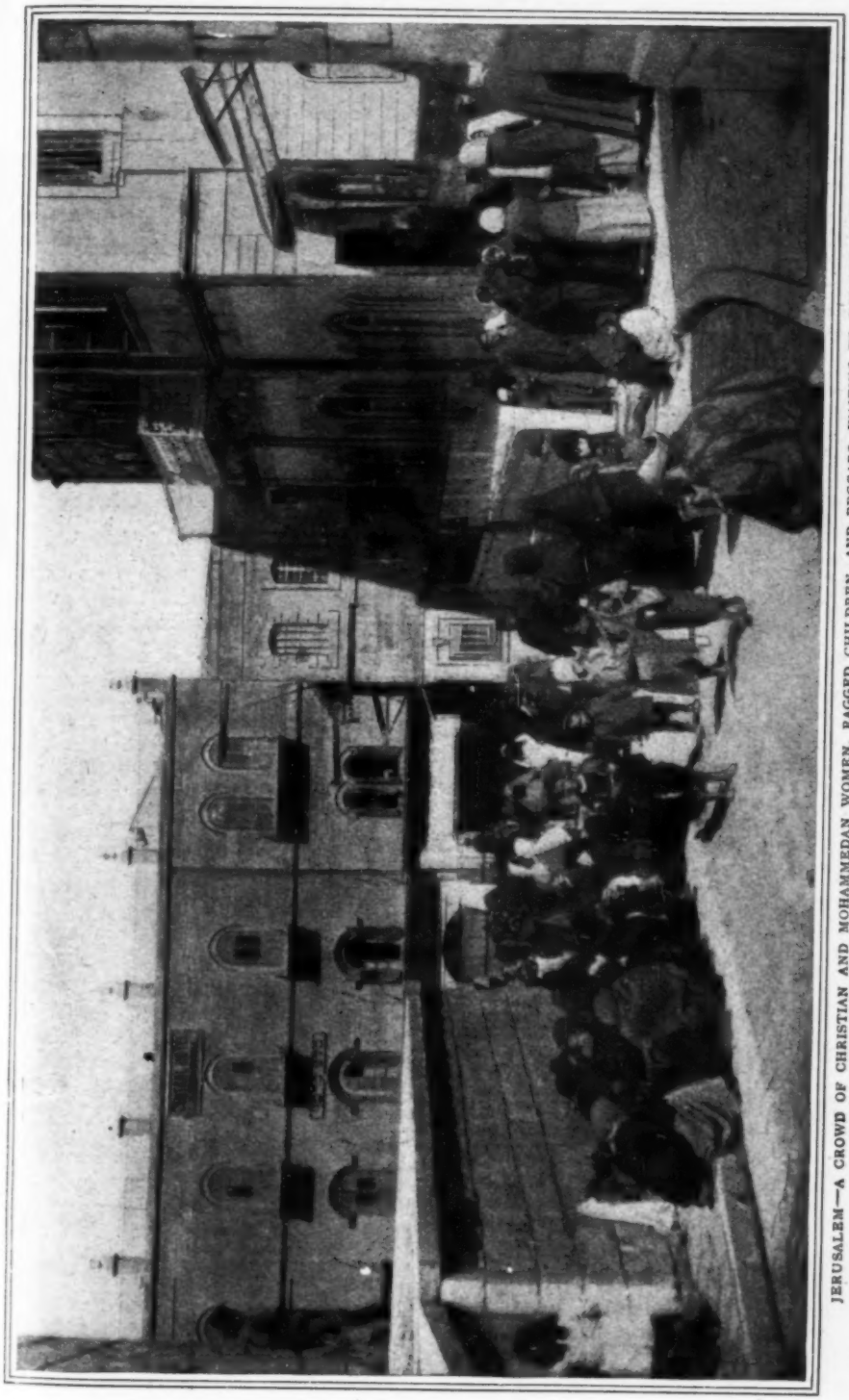
nial experiments are on record from the middle of the nineteenth century onward. Statesmen and philanthropists, practical men and dreamers, gave the subject thought; a Choveve Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement carried the effort forward, first in Russia, and later in other lands; and, largely through the agency of the Jewish Colonization Society, founded and subsidized by Baron de Hirsch, many hundreds of emigrants from Russia, Germany, Austria, and Roumania were transplanted.

The Jews resident in the home land had never wholly abandoned the cultivation of the soil, and the newcomers, though rarely accustomed to farm labor, commonly settled in agricultural colonies, where they achieved a reasonable measure of success. Among the most notable of these agricultural settlements to be seen by the traveler to-day are Petach Tikvah (the Gate of Hope) and Rishon le Zion (the First in Zion), in Judæa, and Rosh Pinah (the Cornerstone) and Yessod Hamaaleh (Excelsior), in Galilee.

But the planting of small, scattered, struggling colonies was a slow way of bringing the country again into the possession of the Jewish people; and ambitious plans began to be propounded for reaching this end expeditiously and without awaiting the uncertain advent of a Messiah. These plans usually looked to some sort of international agreement, under which Turkish control in Palestine should be partly or wholly relaxed, and the governments of western Europe should give moral, if not material, support to the establishment of an autonomous Jewish state. Napoleon was at one time interested in such a scheme,



JERUSALEM—A CROWD OF CHRISTIAN AND MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN, RAGGED CHILDREN, AND BEGGARS, WAITING TO RECEIVE GIFTS OF FOOD AND CLOTHING AT RELIEF HEADQUARTERS

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and hardly a public man of western Europe failed to give thought to the subject during the next hundred years.

The Zionist movement, however, as we know it to-day, really dates from about thirty-five years ago. It was in 1896 that the Viennese journalist and playwright, Theodore Herzl, published his epoch-marking pamphlet, "The Jewish State"; and it was in the following year that the first general Zionist congress was held, at Basle, in Switzerland.

The burden of Herzl's book was that if Jewry was to be saved from disintegration and eventual extinction, a Jewish state must somehow, somewhere, be built up. The author was not sure that Palestine was the best place for it. He thought that South America, or even Africa, might be preferable; but on the necessity of establishing such a state he spoke with burning conviction. The whole effect of his argument was to stimulate zeal for the reoccupation of Palestine, notwithstanding the interesting offer which came from the British colonial secretary, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, of territory for a Jewish state in Uganda.

By 1910 Zionism numbered among its active leaders such men as Israel Zangwill and Max Nordau, and had the active support of more than three hundred thousand Jews in all parts of the world. Up to the time of the great war, eleven international congresses were held, and the movement steadily strengthened its hold upon the Jewish mind. It also enlisted the sympathies of many non-Jewish students of world affairs; although it must be added that many people, Jews and non-Jews alike, considered the restoration of Jewish rule in the Holy Land as a matter of sentimental importance only, and in no sense a solution of the great problems that press upon the Hebrew race.

PALESTINE IN THE WORLD WAR

In a war which involved the four quarters of the globe, it was to be expected that Palestine, ancient cockpit of warring races, would witness a renewal of the scenes of conflict of bygone ages. And so it fell out. General Allenby's northward sweep across the country in 1917-1918, rolling up the Turkish army and finally putting it to rout, proved not only one of the most dramatic military movements of the war, but a weighty factor—some go as far as to say the decisive factor—in causing the Teutonic powers to seek an armistice.

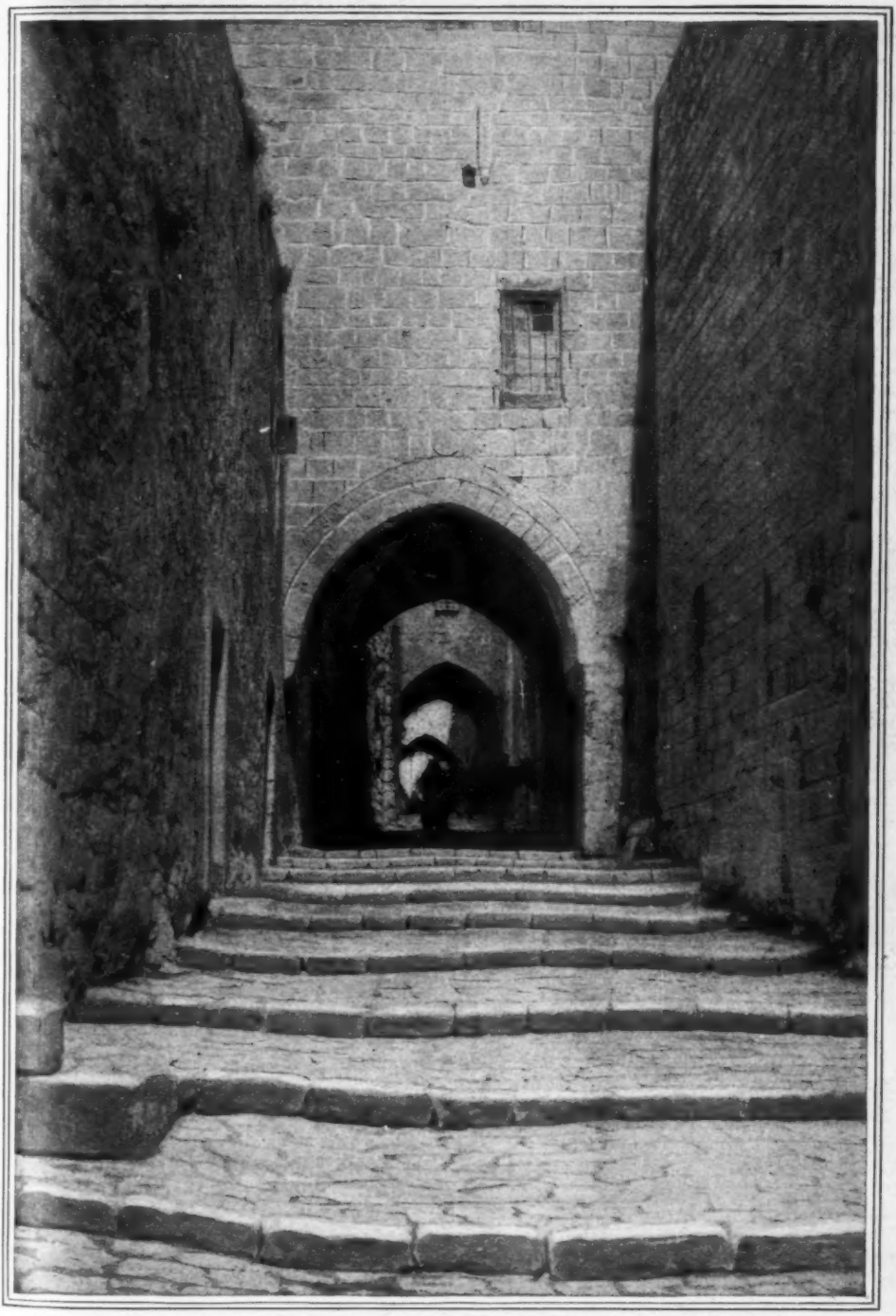
When it became apparent that Turkey would be drawn into the war, the Jewish, as well as the Arab, population of Palestine was not averse to giving its support. The Young Turk constitution of 1908 did, indeed, impose full obligation to render military service in case of a war; but there was hope that the religious freedom and civil rights which that instrument guaranteed would yet be realized under the Sultan's dominion.

Besides, the Jewish inhabitants could not forget that for six hundred years Turkey had held her gates wide open to the Jews who fled from the Spanish Inquisition and similar terrors in other supposedly civilized countries. A few months of service in the wretchedly equipped and provisioned Turkish armies sufficed, however, to give a different view of things, and in the end the overthrow of Turkish rule by Allied arms was hailed by the Jews as the greatest blessing that had befallen the country and its people in modern times.

The good-will of the Arab population was retained for a longer period, mainly as a result of German propaganda. Under the leadership of Leuteveld von Hardegg, consul at Haifa, the Arabs had been led to look upon the Kaiser as the veritable savior of Islam. Friday prayers in the mosques regularly ended with an invocation for the welfare of the Sultan and of "Hadji Wilhelm." Pamphlets were distributed in which it was laboriously argued that the German people were not Christians, like the French and English, but descendants of the prophet Mohammed. None the less, even the Arabs gradually turned against their Turkish coreligionists and went over to the program of an autonomous Arab state.

In the early stages of the war, Germany's main aim in the East was to cut the Suez Canal communications of the British Empire. The task looked comparatively easy. Partly on that account, and partly because the full forces of the Teutonic powers were needed on the European fronts, it was entrusted to the Turks.

Two great campaigns were launched for the purpose, one in 1915 and the other in the following year; but the Anzac cavalry and the British infantry put up a valiant defense, and both movements totally failed. The Anglo-French operations in the Dar-



THE STREET OF STEPS, JERUSALEM—THE HOLY CITY IS BUILT ON A HIGH PLATEAU BOUNDED ON THREE SIDES BY DEEP RAVINES, AND SOME OF ITS STREETS ASCEND SHARPLY, LIKE THOSE OF THE HILL TOWNS OF ITALY

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danelles during these years, though themselves costly and ill-fated, kept the Sultan's forces divided, and may very well have saved both the canal and Egypt from Turkish conquest.

In 1917 the offensive in the Red Sea region passed for the first time to the British, and plans were formulated for a great northward movement which would break the Turkish power in Palestine, Syria, and perhaps even Asia Minor. The advance was started from Egypt under Sir Archibald Murray, who, however, after some initial successes, was halted before he could get far across the Palestine border. Then it was that General Edmund Allenby—now Lord Allenby—the most brilliant cavalry leader who appeared during the entire war, was placed in command.

Utilizing the summer of 1917 for improving the morale and equipment of his expeditionary force, Allenby started forward in October and promptly captured the two great outposts of Beersheba and Gaza. Aided by Arab troops from the Hedjaz, he swept on, cutting the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, and at the middle of November occupying Jaffa itself. This, in turn, put him in a position to threaten Jerusalem; and, after the surrounding Turkish positions were one by one taken by storm, the city itself surrendered on December 10, 1917.

THE RUINED BUILDING CALLED THE HOUSE OF LAZARUS, IN THE VILLAGE OF EL AZARIYEH, IDENTIFIED AS THE BIBLICAL BETHANY, WHERE LIVED LAZARUS, MARTHA, AND MARY, THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST

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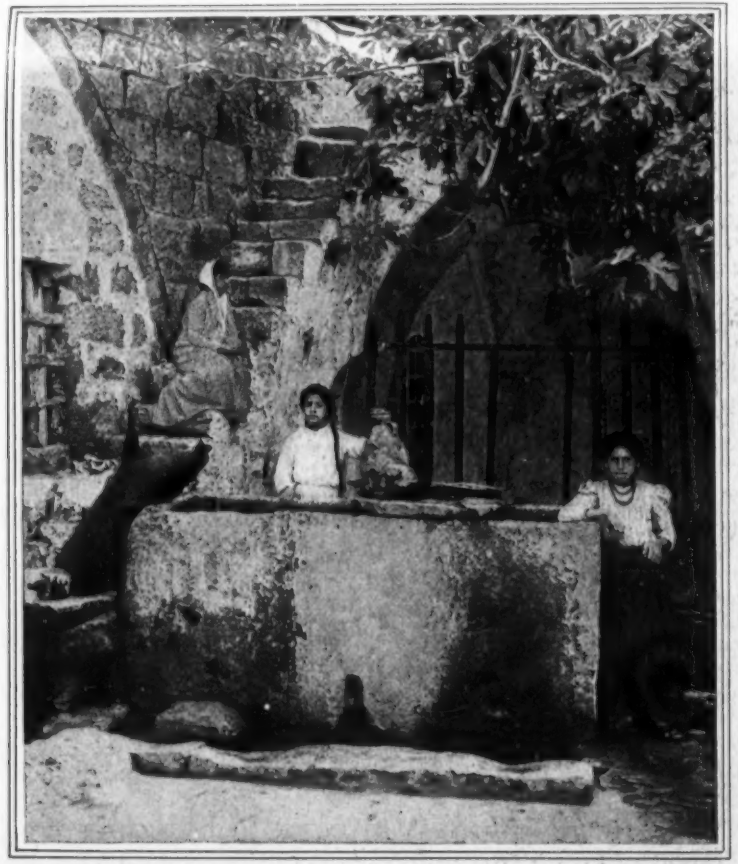
The fall of Jerusalem—the twenty-third such occurrence in the city's recorded history—was a signal event. Bringing to an end, as it did, seven centuries of Moslem control over the holy places, it was ac-



AN OLD HOUSE IN EL AZARIYEH (BETHANY), SAID TO BE THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER, VISITED BY JESUS

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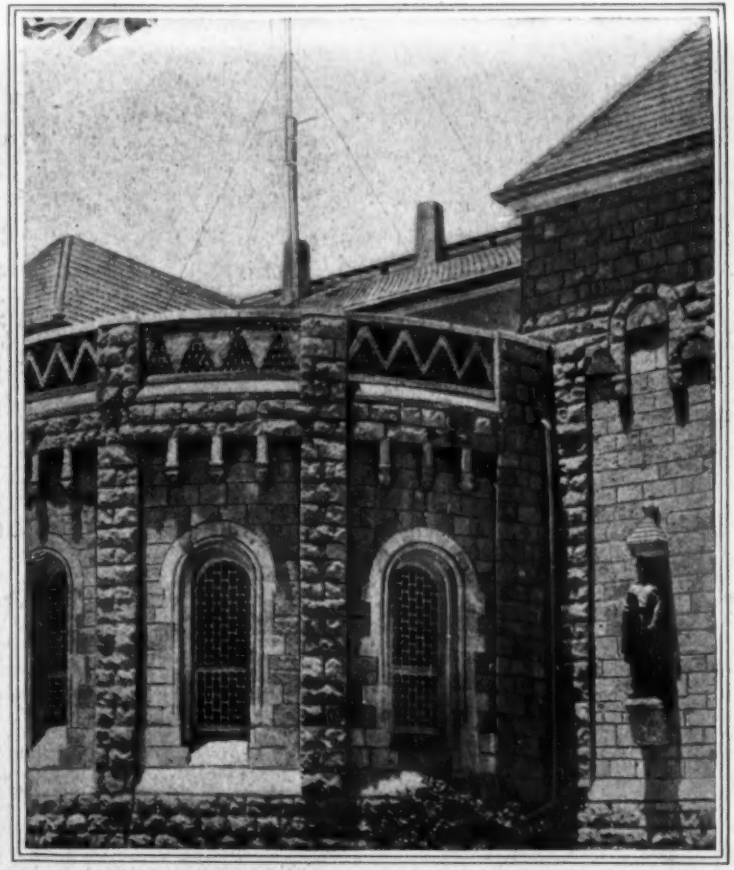

THE FORMER KAISER'S PALACE ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, NOW THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER

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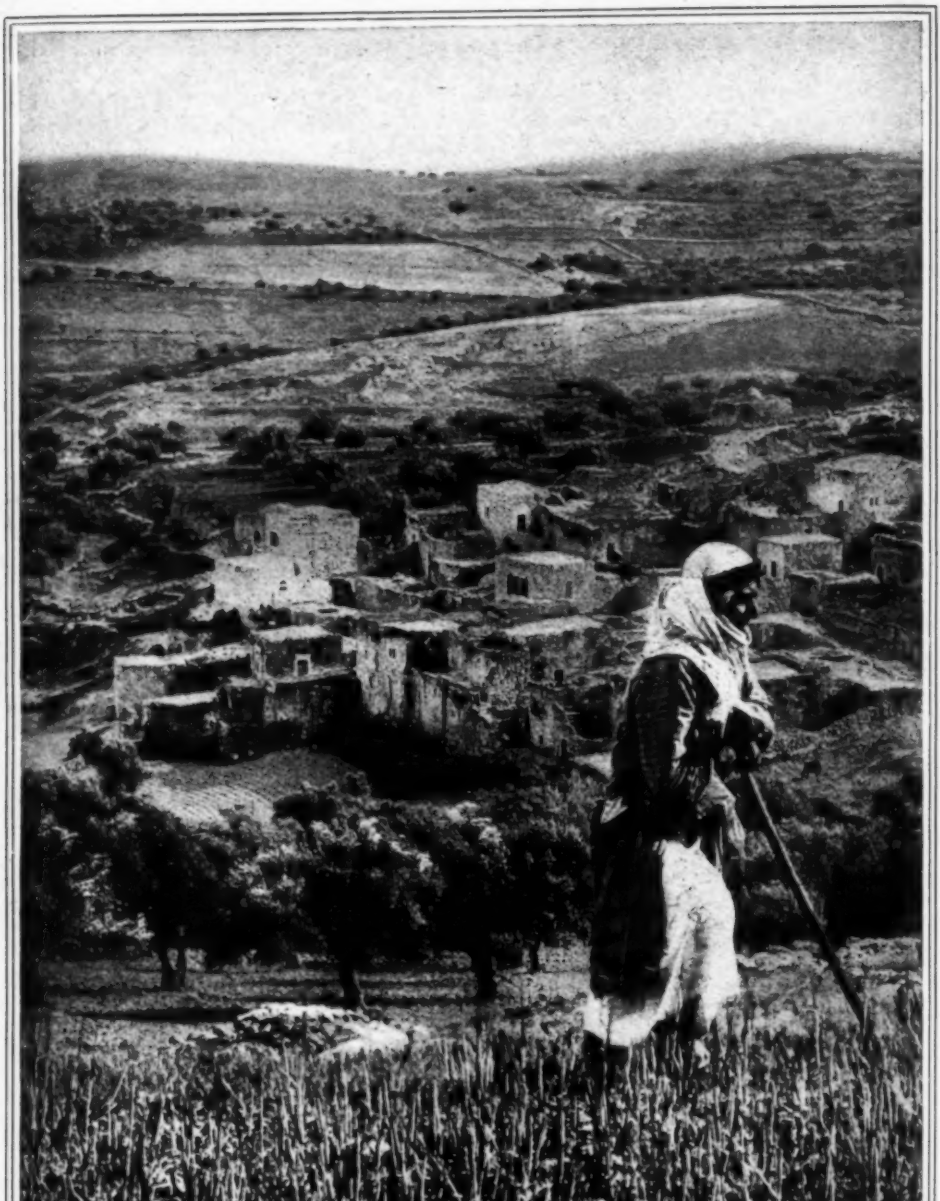

OLIVE-GROVES AND HOUSES OF THE VILLAGE OF EL AZARIYEH (BETHANY), WITH THE HILLS OF JUDÆA IN THE DISTANCE, AS SEEN FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, LOOKING AWAY FROM JERUSALEM

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claimed by the Christian populations of the western world as the final achievement of the great purpose of the medieval crusaders. It also stimulated the aspirations of the Zionists for the re-establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and of the Mohammedan Arabs for the construction of a Greater Arabia.

The stroke could not be followed up forthwith, because part of the expeditionary army was hurriedly withdrawn to reenforce the Allied lines in France, now threatened by General Ludendorff's memorable last drive. But enough troops remained to hold what had been taken, and indeed to capture Jericho; and when, in the early autumn, the tide turned in the West, and fresh troops reported to Allenby from India, the campaign was resumed. A bold cavalry dash carried the conquerors to Nazareth; Haifa and Acre fell; Tiberias was taken; everywhere west of the Jordan the Turks fled northward in a mad rout; everywhere on the east they were pushed back into the desert by the Arabs.

Soon all Palestine was cleared. Then the pursuit set in which led to the capture, in swift succession, of Damascus, Beirut, Tripoli, and Aleppo; and on October 14 the newly enthroned Sultan, Mohammed VI, appealed from Constantinople to President Wilson to use his influence to secure an armistice.

Two weeks later the armistice was signed, and Turkey ceased to be an active factor in the war. In another week Germany was seeking a similar agreement, and on November 11 fighting ceased all round. The brilliant Allied victories in Palestine and Syria unquestionably hastened the Teutonic collapse.

FRENCH AND BRITISH CLAIMS IN THE EAST

The question of conquest now gave way to the problem of future political status. Assuming that the Holy Land was not to be restored to the Turk—and there was nobody left to argue for that—who was to have it? Or was it to become an independent state?

Two western nations, chiefly, were interested in the question—France and Great Britain. France was concerned because for almost four hundred years the protection of Christians living in the Ottoman dominions, and of the *lieux saints* (holy places), had been a treasured prerogative of her foreign policy. A long line of treaties guaranteed this right, and public opinion had been stirred on many occasions by threatened invasions of it. The difficulties with Great Britain which filled the reign of Louis Philippe arose mainly from this source, and France went into the Crimean War primarily to prevent Russia from displacing her at Jerusalem. As recently as 1907 her special rights were freshly guaranteed in an agreement with Italy. During the great war this interest was never relaxed, and it was noted that when the British army entered Damascus the French fleet sailed into Beirut harbor.

French aspiration looked to the control of *la Syrie intégrale*, including Palestine. While ready to admit French priority in northern and northeastern Syria, however, Englishmen felt that the Holy Land proper ought to be brought into the British sphere. French commercial interests lay farther north; the region had been conquered mainly by British arms; it seemed too near Egypt and the Suez Canal to be allowed to pass under the domination of any non-British power.

When the war closed the presumption strongly favored the British. Especially was this the case if the wishes of the country's inhabitants were to be consulted. The Arabs had grown accustomed to close working relations with the British soldiers and administrators, and were suspicious of French designs. The Jews, on their part, were much impressed by Britain's cordial attitude toward Zionism.

This attitude had found most notable expression in a letter written by Foreign Secretary Balfour to Lord Rothschild under date of November 2, 1917—at the time, it will be observed, when Allenby's expeditionary force was bearing down on Jerusalem, and when the conquest of the entire country by British arms had come to be regarded as a certainty. "His Majesty's Government," it was declared, "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing will be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

This declaration, though manifestly guarded, was received by Jews throughout

THE BUILDING KNOWN AS THE TOMB OF THE VIRGIN, IN BETHLEHEM—BETHLEHEM, THE BIRTHPLACE OF CHRIST, FIVE MILES SOUTHWEST OF JERUSALEM, IS ONE OF THE GREAT PILGRIM SHRINES OF PALESTINE

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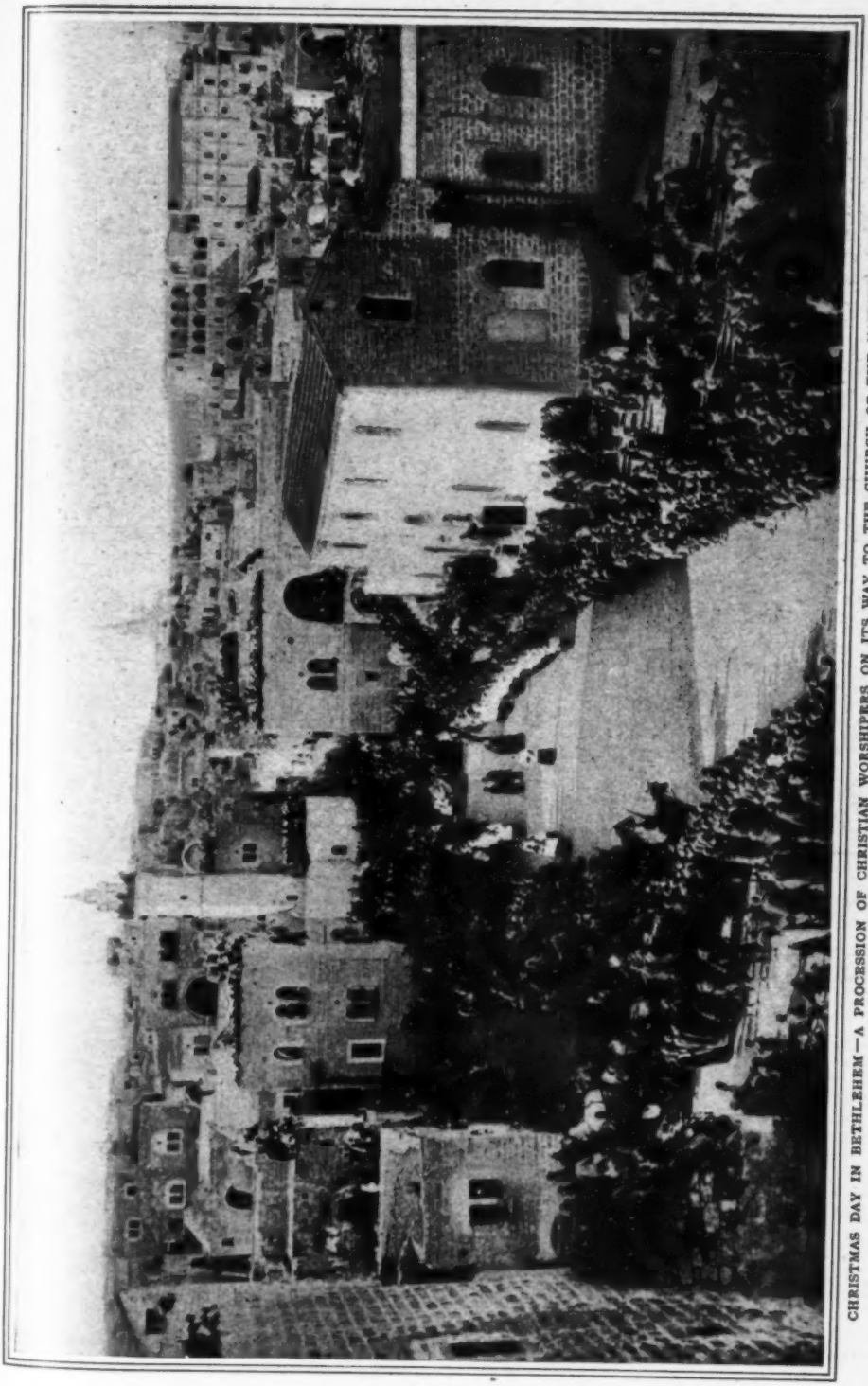
the world as a formal recognition of Jewish nationality and as a pledge, so far as Great Britain was concerned, of the creation of a separate and autonomous Jewish state. "In place of being a wanderer in every clime," commented the London *Jewish Chronicle*, "there is to be a home for the Jew in his ancient land. The day of his exile is to be ended. The invitation to us is to enter into the family of nations of the earth endowed with the franchise of nationhood, to become emancipated, not as individuals or sectionally, but as a whole people."

Notwithstanding the British pronouncement and the general assent with which it was received by the other Allied and associated powers, there was room for doubt as to what the peace conference would do, and the Zionists went to Paris prepared to make a great fight for the realization of their hopes. They submitted formal demands which included a recognition of "the historic title of the Jews to Palestine" and "the right of the Jews to reconstitute Palestine as their national home." At a session specially devoted to the subject their cause was presented in passionate appeals by Dr. Weizmann and other leaders. Mr. Lloyd George declared for the plan, and President Wilson promised his support.

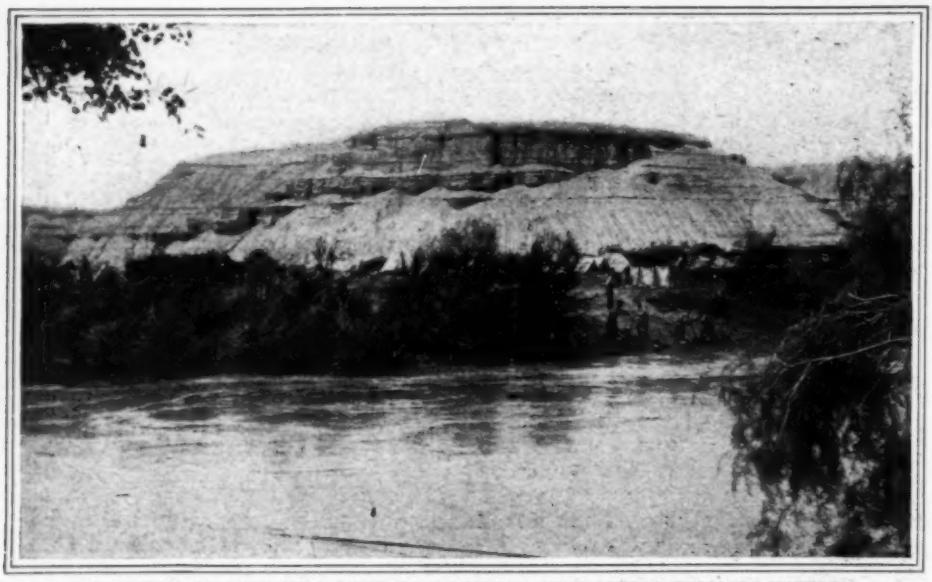
THE CASE AGAINST THE ZIONISTS

As was expected, powerful opposition developed. Protest came, first of all, from the non-Jewish population of Palestine itself. Over against one hundred thousand inhabitants of the Jewish communities, there are six hundred and thirty thousand non-Jews, of whom five hundred and fifty thousand form "a solid block in racial and religious sympathy with the Arabs of Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt."

Zionists had always said—Americans were repeatedly told—that this huge Moslem majority was prepared to accept the rule of a revived Hebrew state. Students of international politics, however, discounted this view of the situation, and developments connected with the peace conference showed it to be false—although it must be admitted that the Arab attitude was now stiffer than in the days before "self-determination" caught the world's fancy.



CHRISTMAS DAY IN BETHLEHEM—A PROCESSION OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIPERS ON ITS WAY TO THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, WHICH CONSTANTINE THE GREAT BUILT UPON THE TRADITIONAL SITE OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST



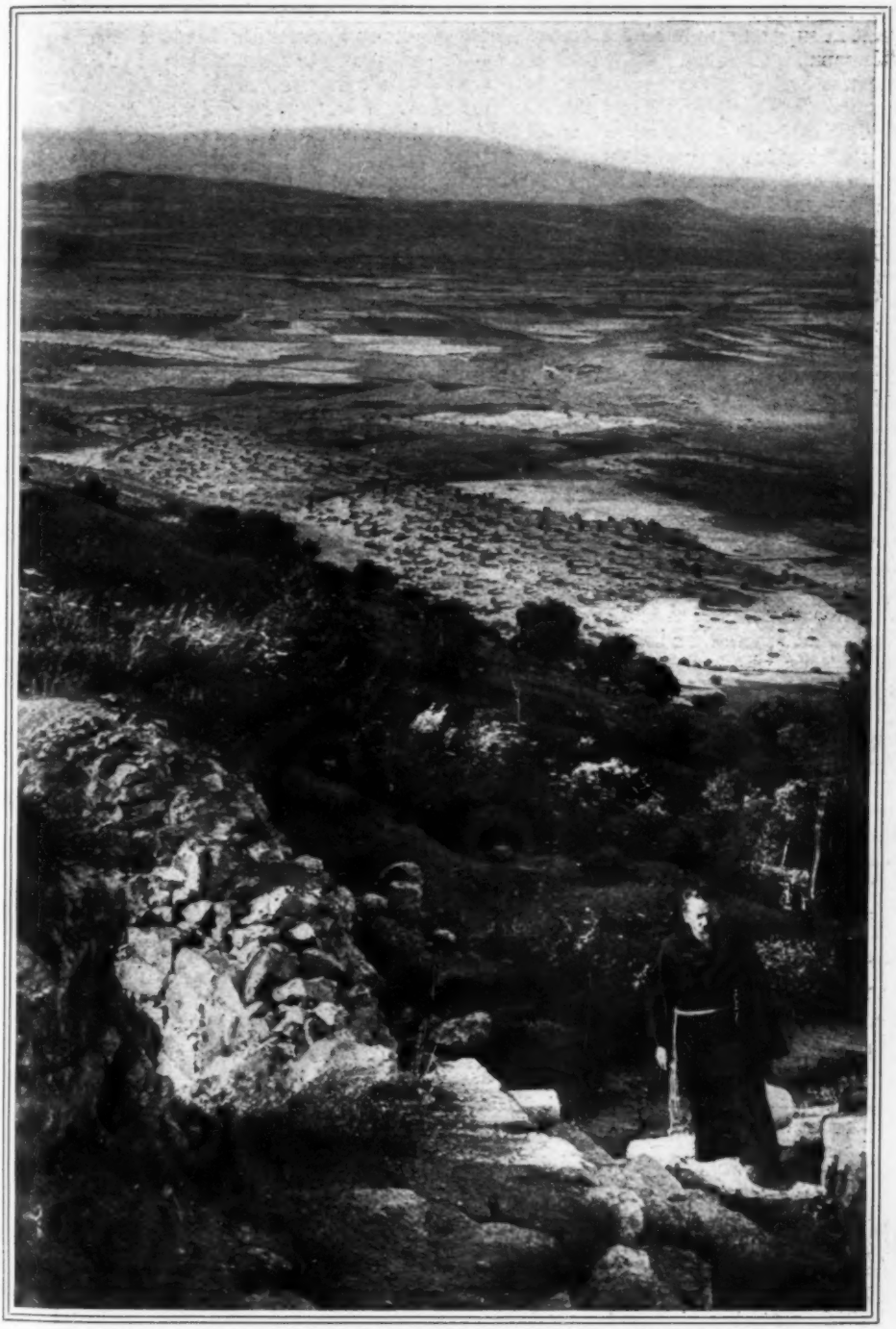
THE JORDAN, THE PRINCIPAL RIVER OF PALESTINE, WITH BRITISH TROOPERS WATERING THEIR HORSES

From the Moslem-Christian Club of Jerusalem there came to the peace conference, as an expression of the views of all non-Jewish Palestine, a lengthy petition urging that Palestine is Arab, not Jewish; that it has been the seat of a predominantly Arab civilization for more than a thousand years; that ninety-five per cent of the agricultural land is held by Arabs; that the Zionists are fanatics and disturbers of the peace.

In the second place, protests were voiced by large and representative bodies of Jews;

ARABS PLOWING THEIR FIELDS IN THE UPPER JORDAN VALLEY, THE MOST FERTILE PART OF PALESTINE

From a copyrighted photograph by the Keystone View Company, New York



THE HILLS OF GALILEE, AS SEEN FROM MOUNT TABOR, THE TRADITIONAL SCENE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

for it must not be supposed that Judaism is a unit in supporting the Zionist plans. Dr. Weizmann's plea before the peace conference was promptly followed by a counter-argument by M. Sylvain Lévy, professor at the Collège de France, and it was brought out that French Jews generally, including such men of eminence as Henri Bergson and Joseph Reinach, are of the opinion that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would be an unpractical and dangerous experiment. President Wilson's promise to support the Zionist program was met by a protest signed by almost three hundred prominent American Jews.

Finally, the Zionist scheme was opposed by large numbers of people who themselves had no racial or religious interests at stake. Their reasons were, in most cases, twofold —first, the fear that the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine would cause an anti-Semitic uprising throughout the Moslem world; and, second, the realization that even if the proposed state should be set up, the problem of the oppressed Jew would remain, for the reason that Palestine could never receive more than one-third of the six million Jews whose unfortunate lot wrings pity from the world to-day.

The peace conference disbanded without settling the affairs of the Near East, but the discussions indicated that while France would obtain control of Syria, Palestine would be put in the custody of Great Britain. So it came about. The treaty submitted to the Sultan's government last May completely severed the country from Turkey, and agreements arrived at by the Allied powers, notably at the San Remo conference, erected it into a separate state.

THE BRITISH MANDATE FOR PALESTINE

Full independence, however, was considered unsafe for Palestine itself, as well as contrary to the interests of the western nations. Accordingly, Great Britain received a mandate for the control of the country's affairs, subject to the superior authority of the League of Nations; and it was in effect announced that, in pursuance of Mr. Balfour's promise of 1917, the country would be so administered as to enable it to become a national home for the Jews of the world.

British control, which had spread from one end of the land to the other as General Allenby's army pressed on from victory to victory, was thus regularized, and it has now been in operation more than two and one-half years. At first it was naturally of a strictly military character; and by the favor which it showed to the Arab interests in the country, as against the Jewish, it laid itself open to the charge of being false to the Zionist professions of the Foreign Office. Last June, however, with the arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel, a Jew and a Zionist, as high commissioner, a new stage in the unfolding of British policy was reached.

One of the first things that Sir Herbert did was to make a tour of the country, including the towns east of the Jordan, with a view to establishing good personal relations with the local chiefs and explaining to them the purposes of the British overlordship. The trip was very successful. All elements professed to be satisfied with the new arrangements, and even the Bedouin chiefs, gathered in council at Es Salt, beyond the Jordan, unanimously affixed their seals to a document expressing their desire for British rule.

Thereupon civil government was proclaimed and constructive political and economic measures were actively undertaken. Included among these measures are the widening of the narrow-gage Jaffa railway, the deepening of the harbor of Haifa, a campaign against the causes of malaria, rearrangement of racial quarters in a number of the towns, the unification of weights and measures, the taxation of the rising values of land, the establishment of banks for granting long-term loans for agriculture and industry, and the floating of a foreign loan of three million pounds to be used for railroad extensions, telephone and telegraph lines, the development of a highway system, and the erection of government buildings. It may be added that steps have been taken to obtain this loan, or a part of it, in the United States.

Governmental organization is still incomplete; but the principle on which it is being worked out is the association of Moslems, Jews, and even native Christians, with Englishmen, in the various administrative boards and other bodies. Thus, in the judicial branch, the court of first instance in each of the five judicial districts consists of an English judge and two native judges, and the Supreme Court of Appeal at Jerusalem is similarly constituted.

Jewish immigrants are arriving in the country at the rate of about a thousand a

A GANG OF ARAB LABORERS AT WORK UPON A NEW ROAD OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM

month. Some settle in the older Jewish colonies, others find employment in road-construction, land-reclamation, and other projects which the government has in hand. Vessels flying the Jewish flag below the British ply regularly between Constantinople and Jaffa, carrying immigrants from Soviet Russia, Roumania, Galicia, the Caucasus, and the Crimea.

The map-maker in the Near East has still a great amount of work to do, and among the boundary-lines to be definitely drawn are those of Palestine. The Zionists have usually been modest in their territorial demands.

"We ask not," declared Nahum Sokolov, author of a recent and excellent two-volume history of Zionism, a short time ago, "for the greater Palestine of Solomon, but simply for the tract of country between our ancient boundaries and Beersheba—or, in modern terms, from the River Kishon to El Arish. Westward our limit will be the sea. Eastward it may well be that the new Arabian kingdom will preclude our extension beyond the River Jordan, which would thus form our eastern boundary."

THE QUESTION OF WATER-SUPPLY

The engineers who have been working on the problem of reclaiming the country's extensive desert and waste lands insist, however, on more extended boundaries, especially in the north; and the British government is inclined to back them up. The question is primarily one of water-supply. The engineers say that unless the Jordan throughout its entire course, the Litany River, the Yarmuk Basin, and Lake Meserib are included in Palestine territory, the economic development of the country will be impossible.

This would place the northern boundary in the latitude of Damascus and Sidon, instead of that of Haifa and the Sea of Galilee, and would bring into Palestine a broad belt of territory which is now claimed by Syria, backed by France as the mandatory in that region. With a view to such a delimitation of frontiers, Sir Herbert Samuel has asked his government to take up the question with France without delay.

With adequate arrangements for the storage and distribution of water, the country can be made to support a population of some millions. This, however, would also presuppose the wide-spread introduction of intensive, scientific agriculture, which at best can come but slowly. The bulk of the agricultural population to-day consists of the Arab fellaheen, or peasants, who cultivate the soil, whether as owners or as renters, in the most primitive fashion. The Jewish colonists use modern machinery and methods, and they have introduced important new products, such as the almond; but their example has been lost upon the Arabs, and it is not easy to see how the latter can be shaken out of the unprogressive methods and habits which served their ancestors centuries ago.

Industrial development is not impossible. There are no known deposits of iron or coal, but the sharp falls of the Jordan and other streams can be made to yield electric power; and native products—lumber, papyrus, cotton, tobacco, olives—furnish the raw materials for important, even though small-scale, manufactures.

Two main problems, in summary, fall to the British administrator in his new field of effort. The first is the rehabilitation and modernization of the country on economic lines, with a view to fitting it to receive and nourish the enlarged population which it will be called upon to sustain. The fruits of British engineering and agricultural achievements in Egypt, India, and other tropical and subtropical lands give promise that this task will be efficiently accomplished.

The second problem is to hold in agreeable relations the two major elements of the country's population, the Arabs and the Jews. In former times these two peoples were reasonably harmonious; but this was because they were equally subject to Turkish rule. Under the new conditions, open animosity has developed. Last June an Arab *pogrom* was launched in Jerusalem which resulted in the death of six Jews and injury to two hundred others. There have been other outbreaks; and while it may be true that the demonstrations were engineered from Damascus or other foreign Arab centers, there can be no doubt that resentment against the increasing numbers and influence of the Jews, coupled with the growth of the Pan-Arab movement in general, gives promise of trouble.

Here again, however, it is possible to take a hopeful view; for the Britisher is an adept at holding mutually hostile races in order and inspiring them with a wholesome respect for himself, if not one for another.

The Atheist

BY WILLIAM MERRIAM ROUSE

Illustrated by Paul Stahr

DR. JACOB ARMSTRONG was something new under the sun to the people of Dunster. He was a professed atheist, with pride in his unbelief. The serious-minded men and women of the village were used to believing first in God, and next in Horace Greeley, and to them the new doctor was a being of a kind known only by hearsay or reading. The Adirondack Mountains of seventy years ago did not shelter many infidels, as they were commonly called, and a man like Jacob Armstrong was marked.

Indeed, he would have been marked in almost any time and place, and not alone because of his quarrel with religion. He was peculiar in appearance, peculiar in habit of speech, and he had brought with him from foreign parts a store of advanced scientific knowledge which was regarded by people of less education as having something to do with the works of the Evil One. To these divergencies from the ordinary there was added an ape named Nero, who was friend, companion, and subject for experiment to the physician.

Dr. Armstrong did not draw himself any nearer to the community to which he was supposed to minister when he rented the old Sayre place, which had not been occupied since the Sayre family migrated westward a score of years before. Dunster lay in the blue and silver loop of the Skeene River, but the house chosen by the doctor was one of a very few lying outside the loop, on the other side of the stream. There he settled, however, despite the necessity for crossing the old log bridge every time he had to visit a patient. And he and Nero, the ape, seemed alike comfortable among the rats and spiders and accumulations of dust in the long-deserted house.

The nine days' wonder died out in time, and it might have been that the ape-like man and the man-like ape would have slouched their ways about the mountain roads for a lifetime of uneventful monotony if it had not been that Grace Rowland lived in Dunster, and that she was in the flower of her beauty at that time. There was many a handsome girl south of Canada, to be sure, but in Grace the beauty of the spirit seemed to be made manifest. Perhaps old Hiram Pennifield put it best when he said:

"If any man in the world ain't in love with Grace Rowland, it's either because he ain't seen her or because he's blind crazy about some other gal!"

The big, lean hunters from the mountains and the husky men of the night shift at the forge, leaning against the hitching-rail in front of Pennifield's store, marked how Dr. Armstrong stopped in his tracks at the first sight of Grace. The ape stopped behind him, with an exact imitation of his abruptness; and both of them looked at her out of small, bright eyes until she disappeared down the street. Then the doctor ran a thick but sensitive hand over the close-cut hair that grew down nearly to a point on his forehead, and strode along with thick arms swinging from heavy shoulders.

In its outer aspect the incident did not seem important. The loungers about Pennifield's store could not have said how they knew that Dr. Armstrong was thinking of the girl when he stopped and passed his hand over his thick, short hair; but it was "in the air," as they said in Dunster, that he had his mind launched in the direction of Grace Rowland. Gradually this idea found expression in nebulous gossip—gossip which remained nebulous up to the time of the events that have preserved the name of the infidel doctor in Dunster for nearly three-quarters of a century.

For a few weeks the newcomer was looked upon with a degree of suspicion and

aloofness; but the spirit of the time and the country was one of fair play. Even though the church members believed Dr. Armstrong foreordained to eternal punishment, they gave him a chance to dispense his pills and potions in this world. To the surprise of every one, he was easy in his treatment of the poor, and not at all an unpleasant man to talk with, so long as one did not veer toward the subject of religion.

II

At the end of a couple of months the only man in the village who positively and consciously disliked the physician was Nathan Barclay, prosperous owner of the sawmill, and one of the few thoroughly well educated men in the township. He wrestled with this feeling, alternately ascribing it to some quality of evil inherent in the doctor and to his own jealousy.

Barclay loved Grace Rowland. He believed that she knew it, and that her kindness to him was the herald of success; but up to the coming of Armstrong he had been held back a little by that feeling of worship with which men who love deeply needs must surround the beloved. When the doctor spoke to the girl in the street, or when he went to the house to prescribe for one of Deacon Henry Rowland's attacks of sciatica, Barclay became possessed by horror and filled with a desire for battle.

But at length his mind became clear as to the physician; and it was at a church sociable at the house of Deacon Rowland that this happened. At such a gathering, as a matter of custom and democratic duty, anybody was welcome. Prominent figures, like justices of the peace, merchants, and professional men, were expected to be present. In this case Dr. Armstrong did his duty and went to the sociable, although his sense of obligation did not carry him to the point of discarding the frayed and soiled black satin stock that he had worn ever since coming to Dunster, nor the homespun coat that hung upon his shoulders as if it were a covering flung over some object not pleasant to the eye.

He sat apart from the games of the younger people and talked with men of years and importance, as became one of his position in the community; but it was noticeable, at least to Barclay, that the doctor's glance wandered from the faces of those with whom he talked to the form of Grace Rowland, moving happily through the intricacies of a game which would have been called the Virginia reel if dancing had not been banned by the edicts of the churches in Dunster.

Whenever she passed the doorway through which the young people could be seen, Dr. Armstrong's eyes seemed to know, by some uncanny process, and turn. To Nathan Barclay, seeing in the physician more and more resemblance to the ape—which had been left at home that evening—a mere look was an insult.

In the mean time Dr. Armstrong's not unpleasant voice flowed on and on.

"Yes, gentlemen," came to the ears of Barclay after a period of immersion in his own thoughts, "I must draw my own conclusions from the facts, as I have observed them during a considerable period of the practise of medicine. I have never seen any evidence of the existence of this thing that you so vaguely call the 'soul,' nor any single fact to indicate that there might be a life after death."

"But revelation," argued Deacon Rowland, fingering his beard nervously and glancing with a degree of solicitude at the Rev. Henry Stanfield; "surely revelation, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, is sufficient ground for belief!"

"Such evidence would not be accepted in any of our courts of law!" The doctor swept the argument aside with a gesture of authority. "Words set down in a book do not make what they state into fact."

This was the rankest kind of heresy among men who were accustomed to accept a newspaper article with almost the same solemn consideration which they gave to the Bible. A murmur ran about the group, and there were some uneasy twistings in creaking chairs. Heretofore Dr. Armstrong had expressed himself briefly, when occasion arose, with a word or two of skepticism, to the nightly gathering in Pennifield's store, or at the house of a patient. That remarks like these should be made in the presence of a minister was in itself without precedent.

"The human mind, which enables you to think and speak as you do, is generally considered an argument for the existence of a Creator," said Mr. Stanfield quietly. "That magnificent instrument is—"

"Quite likely an accident of nature," exclaimed the physician, with a flash of triumph from his small eyes. "Consider the mind of my beast, Nero—the beast

"GRACE, HAS DR. ARMSTRONG EVER MESMERIZED YOU BEFORE?"

whom you call an ape. He is, as a matter of fact, one of the larger of the anthropoid or manlike simians—an orang-utan. Will you believe, gentlemen, that I can control the mind of this creature as completely as you think your God controls your minds?"

"You mean, perhaps, that you have beaten him and broken his will," suggested Deacon Rowland. "That is by no means a godlike attribute."

"Yes, I have beaten him," the doctor returned sharply; "but that has been merely to discipline him in ordinary matters, and he, like a man, hates me for having improved his manners. That, however, is immaterial to the issue. I have bent his will to my own by the power of will alone, and solely with the instrumentality of the eye. How many of you have read of the great European, Mesmer?"

Only the minister and James Merton, the lawyer, indicated by nods — the latter a little doubtfully — that they knew the name. Barclay knew, roughly, of mesmerism, but he kept silent, wishing to hear what manner of explanation Dr. Armstrong would make.

"Mesmer brought to the attention of the scientific world the ability of certain minds to control the minds of others. That is the thing in the fewest possible words; in one word it is called mesmerism. Very well, then; I have used this power with my orang-utan until I am able to make him perform acts of seeming human intelligence. To him I am a god!"

III

For a little moment no one spoke. Then Deacon Rowland leaned forward and voiced a question out of the awe of complete ignorance of the subject.

"Do you mean to say, doctor, that you can make a man do something he doesn't want to do by looking at him? Is that it?"

The regard of these strong, serious, slightly narrow men was now focused upon Dr. Jacob Armstrong without division of attention. He had got their interest, perhaps more fully than he realized, and they waited in a silence which by its intensity communicated itself to the people in the other room, so that one or two stopped in the doorway. Nathan Barclay felt that something was impending—something more than a mere reply to the question.

"I can make many people do what I tell them, without force or physical contact, and against their wills; but not all persons." The doctor smiled with perfect self-confidence as his bright gaze calmly met the looks of the others. "When I fail, it is either because the will is consciously set against me or because I lack power."

"Then you could make a man commit suicide—or murder?"

It was the lawyer speaking, and he put the question as he might have put it to a hostile witness whose very soul he wished to search.

"There are certain inhibitions in the human mind"—the doctor paused to frown and ruffle his stock with thick fingers—"that prevent the full operation of the mesmeristic influence. I could not make you, for instance, kill the parson; I could not make him commit suicide."

"Ah!" exclaimed the minister. "I am glad to have you acknowledge the presence of some beneficent power within us; but what of a mind that dwells in twilight? Could you make a semi-idiot kill at your command?"

The physician's smile took on the hint of a sneer as he answered the minister.

"You are thinking of my orang-utan, I suppose?"

"I did not mention him—and I asked a question, sir!"

"And I will answer it, sir. The power of the inhibitory processes is usually in proportion to the power of the intellect."

"And the power of your suggestion would increase in geometrical ratio with the lessening of these inhibitions?"

"Something like that," said the doctor, glaring. "Just what have you got in mind?"

Before the minister could reply, the croak of a white-haired grandfather came from a corner of the room.

"I've heard tell of such things afore. I've heard tell that there was such things in Salem, once."

Every one within hearing knew of the Salem witchcraft. At the thought, a kind of deadly solemnity came upon the room, freed as the people there believed themselves to be from superstition.

"Suppose you make a demonstration, here and now, Dr. Armstrong," suggested Mr. Stanfield. "Personally I am satisfied as to the nature of this new science, but it might be well to show the others that it is harmless—harmless except when used by an evil man."

A flash of defiance passed between them. Then Merton spoke.

"Bring in the half-wit, Petey Enders, and try it."

"On the contrary"—Dr. Armstrong's voice rang with the authority he would have used with a rebellious patient—"let us take some one who is neither of weak mentality nor at all bitten by things of the flesh and the devil!"

"You might take the parson," began Deacon Rowland, but Dr. Armstrong interrupted him.

"Or your own daughter!" He leveled a steady finger at the face of the older man, and looked him directly in the eyes. "There is a type as spiritual as we could wish to have. If there is anything of your mind-created devil in this, it surely will not take effect with her!"

Barclay half rose from his chair, but restrained himself in the belief that Deacon Rowland would be sure to forbid an experiment of such a nature. The father of Grace was opening and shutting his mouth indecisively, and finally he said, with a hesitancy not usual to him:

"Why, yes, you—you have my permission, if Grace is willing."

IV

News of what was going on had swept through the house like one of the spring floods that made the usually gentle Skeene River a power for destruction. The room was becoming packed. Dr. Armstrong got up and plowed a way into the larger room where the young people had been at their games.

"Bring two chairs," he commanded; "and stand back, so that there will be a perfectly clear space all about us!"

Nathan Barclay had intended to make an effort to stop the experiment, at whatever cost of making himself appear ridiculous; but before he could interfere the thing was well begun, carried onward by the force of the doctor's personality.

Grace was pushed forward, laughing, by the hands of half a dozen girls. Dr. Armstrong gravely pointed to one of the chairs, and sat down facing her, with his hairy hands resting quietly on his thighs and a steadfast gaze directed into her eyes. The giggling of the young girls ceased, and the whispers of explanation died away.

The smile passed from Grace Rowland's face, but to the observation of the now tortured Barclay she seemed perfectly normal.

"Do not oppose my will," said the physician, speaking in a soothing monotone. "Let yourself relax, and try to hold no thought in your mind. I am not going to harm you."

What seemed like minutes, but was really only an interval of a few seconds, went by, while the tension in the room grew. To Barclay's sensitive perception it seemed that Grace lost something of the light that habitually dwelt in her face, but he could not be sure of it.

The doctor raised his arms slowly and made some slow, sweeping movements. Then he reached into his pocket and took out a bundle of papers.

"You are a little girl," he said, "and this is a beautiful doll."

She took the papers and handled them uncertainly for a moment. Then she laid the bundle in the crook of her arm, as a doll or a baby might lie, and bent over it with such tenderness that no one could doubt the genuineness of her belief. Her body swayed slightly backward and forward, and she began to hum a lullaby.

There came smothered ejaculations from the men and a rustle among the women; but Dr. Armstrong gave his undivided attention to his subject. At the end of a tense minute he spoke again.

"That is not a doll in your arms," he told her. "It is a dirty piece of wood, and quite heavy. Throw it at my feet!"

Her crooked arm sagged as if beneath a weight, and an expression of disappointment and disgust took the place of pleasure in her face. She lifted the papers with apparent difficulty and let them fall to the floor.

Now the doctor rose with great deliberation and stepped nearer to the girl. He peered into her eyes and made a few of the slow movements with his hands.

"Miss Rowland!" He spoke sharply. "You are yourself again! Wake up!"

She started. Instantly her face took on its habitual pleasantness, and she smiled as she rose to her feet quite naturally and answered a few of the eager inquiries of those who crowded up breathlessly for an account of her feelings.

Meanwhile Dr. Armstrong was the subject of something in the nature of an inquisition from Mr. Stanfield. It must be said that he bore himself with great coolness, if with a slight air of contempt, during the time it took to explain to the minister that he was not in the habit of practising his art for amusement, or for any evil purpose, and had only exhibited it tonight for the purpose of lending point to the argument. Yes, he admitted, he did occasionally use it in his profession.

Nathan Barclay, hearing this admission, sought an opportunity to speak alone with Grace Rowland. It was an hour before he found one, and he began to suspect, before the end of the hour, that she was not anxious to talk with him. Hitherto he had not found her disinclined to such a stroll as he proposed through the starlit September night; but in this instance it required persuasion before she finally consented to accompany him. As soon as they were out of ear-shot of the house he turned and faced her.

"Grace," he said, "has Dr. Armstrong ever mesmerized you before?"

"Why—" She turned her face away, even though he would not have been able to fathom its expression in the starlight. "I suppose he has."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Once I had a toothache, I think it was—he had come to see father—and he offered to cure it for me."

"Have there been any other times?"

"Another time—I had a headache."

"Is that all?"

"Yes; but, Nathan, you know there is no reason why I should answer."

"I know that I have no right to ask," he replied quickly. "Yet I am one of the few men in town who has read of mesmerism. Evidently your father does not understand that there is danger in it."

"Danger?" she asked.

"They say that the subject tends to become more and more under the power of the operator."

"Oh! That shows why—" Her voice died away without finishing the sentence.

"Shows what?" Barclay now spoke in a tone of command, carried out of complete self-control by the hint of mystery and of danger to Grace.

"I felt to-night that he was calling me," she said, still with her face turned away. "I felt it even before I heard anything about it. Did you notice how quickly I was there when he wanted me? I couldn't help it."

"Good God!" cried Barclay. "This thing has gone beyond belief—beyond anything I ever heard of!"

"Sometimes I hate him," she went on; "but not when he looks at me."

"Grace!" Barclay seized her by the shoulders and made her stand squarely in front of him. "I love you! You must have known it, although I thought to wait until I had more hope. Answer me—can you care for me? Will you be my wife?"

For a moment there was no reply—only her white, still face staring up to his. Then she leaned against his strong hands, sobbing and clutching at his sleeves.

"Nathan!" came through her tears. "I've loved you for a long time; but I am afraid of him! What can he do? I don't understand it; and I have no right—"

"Leave what is to be done to me!" He gathered her to his breast as a child that needs comforting. "I'll do what is to be done. You're mine, and no powers of darkness are going to take you from me!"

Thus the matter of love was settled between them; and Barclay took his resolve to fight the doctor with brawn and brain, for he did not believe that the struggle would end before one of them was conquered. And so it proved, although the manner of the final victory was not within his imaginings.

V

Deacon Rowland was told of the engagement that night after the sociable had broken up. Although he should have been overjoyed at the prospect of such a son-in-law as Nathan Barclay was sure to be, he seemed haunted by a vague uneasiness. Nevertheless, he gave his consent with genuine heartiness, and on the next day all Dunster and the surrounding country knew that the expected had happened. Rich young Barclay had won the prize of the township.

This sensation, however, was paled by the story of the mesmerism—or magic, as most called it—which Dr. Jacob Armstrong had used at the sociable. The story grew, of course, until it was stated, as of the evidence of witnesses, that Grace Rowland had had large pins driven without pain into her flesh, and that she had been raised into the air without visible support at a wave of the doctor's hand. The reputation of Dr. Armstrong became definitely blackened by an alleged association with the devil; and, if the girl had been other than Grace Rowland, his innocent accomplice would have suffered also.

Barclay held his peace as to the mesmerism, smiled when congratulations were offered him, and bought cigars for the town at Pennifield's store. He was in the store when old Hiram Pennifield himself announced the engagement to Jacob Armstrong, and he watched the doctor's eyes, shining under that pointed growth of hair, for some indication of malice. Whatever was in the man's mind was well veiled, for he offered his hand to Barclay with a few perfunctory words and then slouched out, with Nero slouching after him like a smaller, hair-covered replica.

A little later, from his own place of business, Nathan saw them pass over the old log bridge and toward the Sayre house. Once the doctor turned and looked long down into the village. The ape turned with him and remained motionless as long as the man.

VI

Through the days and weeks that followed Nathan Barclay was distressed as only a man can be who sees the one most

dear to him gradually worn by a malign influence. It was not that Grace became more markedly under the power of the mysterious feeling to which she had confessed on the night of her betrothal; it was rather that she could not shake off her fear of the doctor and her belief that at his command she would have to obey. To this helplessness she insisted upon clinging, although with tears and self-denunciations. Nothing that her lover could say convinced her that she would not be at the mercy of the mesmerist when he might choose.

During this time, to the dismay of Barclay, Dr. Jacob Armstrong behaved himself with the utmost circumspection. Nathan had felt sure that he would make other attempts to mesmerize Grace, under cover of visits to her father; but quite the contrary was the case. The first time that Deacon Rowland sent for the doctor, Armstrong did not respond in person, but gave medicine to the messenger who went after him. Barclay realized more than ever how hard to cope with was his enemy; for nothing could shake the young merchant's belief that Dr. Armstrong coveted Grace Rowland. That conviction was embedded in the foundations of his soul.

He could not face the doctor in the street and accuse him—of what? That Miss Rowland had a belief that she was in Dr. Armstrong's power? The physician would sneer and reply that no doubt the young lady was hysterical.

Under the strain of waiting for the unknown Barclay grew thin in body, but he developed a mastery of himself and a spiritual strength such as he had never known before. He also became so sensitized to the pain of his betrothed that he knew without asking when fear rode her hard.

The fair days of autumn passed, and it drew on toward the time of storms. As this change in the elements began to manifest itself in dull skies, Barclay's spirit began to take on the colors of nature. The feeling of impending evil grew stronger until neither by night nor by day was he free from dread. In vain he reiterated to himself that he had no tangible thing upon which to base his apprehensions. His rest of nights became less and less, while more and more often during the day he found occasion to stare moodily at the distant gray hulk of the Sayre house.

Frequently Barclay urged an immediate marriage, in order that he might better protect Grace; but she refused, saying that if there were any ground for her fears she wished to save him from possible harm. He could not tell whether this represented her real thought, or whether it was due to the influence of the doctor. So the situation continued static, in a way, but with the tension growing and growing until Barclay found himself unable to bear it longer.

For a week he had realized that he was near the breaking-point. While he did not name to himself just what the nature of the break would be, he felt that it would take the form of a clash with the physician. The suspense was driving him steadily toward this—a clash of bodies or of wills, out of which one would come forever victor.

On a night well fitted for anything which even Dr. Jacob Armstrong could conceive, Nathan Barclay went out to seek the contest. He went not because of any sudden yielding to impulse, but because of his settled conviction that only thus could the matter be settled.

Wind and a spatter of rain drove over Dunster. Only a few scattered lights were left as Barclay, bracing himself now and then against the gusts, went through the empty village streets and toward the log bridge. He carried no weapon, and had no definite intention beyond seeking out the doctor. For the sake of Grace whatever happened must be kept under cover, and for the sake of both her and himself something must happen at once.

He crossed the bridge and reached the Sayre place. The windows of a room on the second floor were lighted.

Barclay went up to the front door and pulled the bell. He heard the jangle die away inside, and had time enough to wonder whether he should ring again before the door swung open. In the light of the lantern which he had of necessity brought, the hairy face of the ape stared up at him. One paw still rested upon the door.

Nathan stepped in, expecting to see the doctor in the dim interior, but it was the beast that closed the door behind him and began to mount the stairs. He followed.

In the doorway of the doctor's study Nathan paused, bracing himself a little for whatever reception might meet him. The ape had gone in ahead and crouched by a roaring grate. At the end of the spacious room, furnished in what had once been magnificent style, sat Dr. Armstrong. Be-

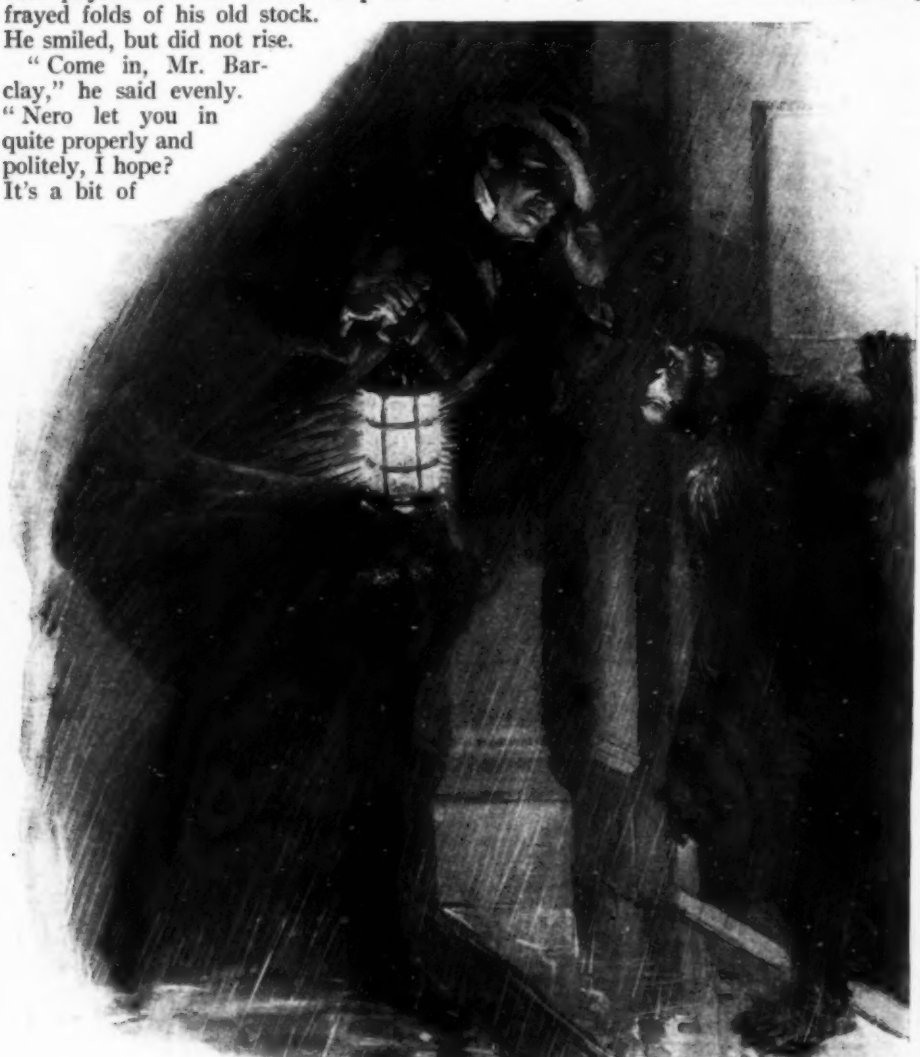
hind him was a great mirror running from floor to ceiling; before him a heavy, flat desk covered with a litter of odds and ends. The physician's chin rested deep in the frayed folds of his old stock. He smiled, but did not rise.

"Come in, Mr. Barclay," he said evenly. "Nero let you in quite properly and politely, I hope? It's a bit of useful service that I've been teaching him recently."

"Yes," answered Nathan. He blew out the candle of his lantern and put it down. "I should like to have a talk with you, Dr. Armstrong."

"By all means, sir. Sit down in that easy chair. Is it a professional matter that brought you here?"

Barclay took the chair indicated, an upholstered structure into which he sank comfortably, and returned the gaze of the man who sat on the other side of the desk. He considered for a moment, and decided to come to the point at once and to put his question boldly.



NATHAN STEPPED IN, EXPECTING TO SEE THE DOCTOR. BUT IT WAS THE BEAST THAT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND BEGAN TO MOUNT THE STAIRS

"I have come to ask you why it is that Miss Rowland has been suffering ever since she was mesmerized by you; why it is that she cherishes a belief that she is in your power."

Nathan waited long for a reply; or so he would have thought if he had not at the time attributed his judgment of the length of the interval to impatience. His eyes even wandered for an instant from the face of the doctor—to catch a glimpse of the ape crawling away from the fireplace. To this he gave no heed, being occupied fully with the matter in hand.

"You were betrothed, I believe, on the same evening that I gave a slight demonstration of power at the sociable," said Dr. Armstrong at length. "Without doubt the matter of which you speak is a delusion, caused by a certain nervousness at the contemplation of marriage. In a girl of Miss Rowland's type—"

"But," interrupted Barclay, growing angry that he should be put aside by words, "you had mesmerized her before that time. She told me so."

As Nathan spoke, the expression on the physician's face altered from polite professional interest to demoniac satisfaction. Barclay had barely time to realize this swift change when he felt a slap across his arms and looked down upon a stout, new rope. It drew taut with a jerk. He tried to spring to his feet; but rising from that chair was like getting out of a nest of pillows, and when he had at last got his feet and arms braced the rope made any further movement impossible. Dr. Armstrong had leaped swiftly around the desk, and before Nathan could overcome his helplessness he had been wound and wound again into his prison.

The doctor went back to his chair and sank into it with deliberation. His expression of evil triumph was so intensified that it was as the red light of hell glowing out of his face.

"I have been a long time teaching Nero to do that trick with a dummy," he said, in a voice that had lost all the smoothness of the man whom the village of Dunster knew. "What a beautiful thing intelligence is! Intelligence! It is more powerful, Mr. Barclay, even in an anthropoid ape, than all your religions and your prayers in man!"

To himself Barclay acknowledged himself surprised and temporarily beaten. That was his first thought as the shock passed and his struggles died. He was able to listen to the doctor's pronouncement calmly, and to look into his eyes steadily, although with the apprehension of death not very far distant. A man of intelligence and education, even though held by no religious belief or moral scruple, could hardly go thus far with a fellow human being and be sane. So Barclay reasoned; and if the physician were not sane, then homicide was probably his intention.

"What are you going to do?" asked Nathan.

"Wait!" exclaimed the doctor. "Perform the initial act and then wait for the inevitable results, just as I have waited weeks for you to come to me!" He gloated, grinning, and rubbed his thick hands. "Given the situation that I created, you were certain eventually to seek out the cause of it—which was myself! A mere problem in mathematics! Mental and emotional pressure brought you here just as surely as another agency will eliminate you from this triangle. For the solution is now clear, and the obtuse angle is to be eliminated this evening!"

Chuckling to himself, Dr. Armstrong seized a quill pen and began to write rapidly upon a sheet of paper.

Meanwhile Barclay, by nature a steady man, did not permit himself to waste any more energy in a physical struggle that was at the time useless; nor did he trouble himself greatly just then with speculation as to the intention of his captor. The immediate necessity was to obtain freedom, and to that end, while watching the face of the doctor, he cautiously began to work one of his hands in the direction of the pocket where he carried his knife. His hands were bound together only loosely, and he thought he might be able, under cover of the table edge, to get the knife and sever the cord.

He got into a flurry of nervousness as he found his fingers creeping toward the edge of the pocket. He forced himself to stop the effort for a moment, in order to get back his steadiness.

"There!" Dr. Armstrong looked up and froze Barclay into instant rigidity. "I have written to Miss Rowland—an exceedingly clever note, as you would admit if I were to permit you to read it! I have told her that you are here, suffering from a severe and sudden mental breakdown, and

that her immediate presence may be of assistance in restoring you to a condition of mental equilibrium. I have told her to come alone, in order that you may not be disturbed by the presence of another person; and I have assured her that she needs no other protection than that of Nero on the trip from her house to mine. Ah, I venture to say that I have thought of everything, my dear rival! Again I call intelligence to your attention!"

Barclay restrained his impulse to leap for the throat of the man on the other side of the desk. He kept silent, hoping that through lack of incentive the vigilance of the doctor would relax, and he might be able to get at his knife.

"Nero!"

Thrice the physician repeated the call before the ape slouched away from the fire and stood before his chair, with hairy face upturned. Dr. Armstrong held up before him, so near that it came within range of his nose as well as his eyes, a lacy shawl that Nathan recognized as belonging to Grace. Then the note, folded into small compass, was placed in the dark paw of the animal.

"Go!"

Instead of the instant obedience that Barclay, watching, had expected, Nero turned bared teeth and eyes of concentrated malevolence toward his master. For long seconds they remained thus, the body of the ape trembling with a hate that was not powerful enough to defy the will of the physician. Then Nero let his head drop as if his thick neck had been of rubber, shuffled toward the door, and went padding down the stairs. Barclay heard the outside door bang.

"Intelligence again!" sneered Dr. Armstrong. "He hates me, because I compel him against his will; but I am still the master, because I have the better brain! Master of you also, Mr. Barclay, and of that beautiful face and form called Grace Rowland! As you shall see—as you shall very shortly see!"

Barclay's fingers struggled again toward his pocket—almost succeeded in entering it—and failed. The physician's bright eyes caught a hint of that movement, and fastened searchingly upon the face of the prisoner, while a hand dipped down into a drawer of the desk and brought up a handsomely mounted pistol. He laid the weapon down within instant reach.

"There is no chance of escape, Mr. Barclay," he said, "nor even a chance to fight. That would be crude, and hardly worthy of the intelligence with which I trust this affair is being conducted."

Nathan settled back in his chair, trying to sag down with all the appearance of helplessness and despair. He did not agree at all with Dr. Armstrong, for hope still sprang powerfully within him. He believed that somehow, before the doctor could consummate whatever sinister plans he had in mind, there would be at least a fighting chance to foil him. It was of possible injury to Grace, more than of losing his own life, that he thought through the long moments that followed.

In silence the two men faced each other across the table. Light from the clusters of candles brought out every seam and line of the evil now unmasked in the face of the physician, who sat motionless with his steady gaze upon Barclay. In the big mirror Nathan could see reflected the dancing fire—its snapping was the only sound in the room—and could command a view of the door by which he had entered.

VII

It was through that doorway that Grace Rowland came breathlessly, instinctively drawing her skirts away from contact with the slouching animal that preceded her. At first she did not see Nathan, whose back was toward her, and whose head scarcely reached to the top of the chair. Her questioning gaze went instantly toward Dr. Armstrong, and she moved swiftly toward him.

He rose and bowed, and indicated a straight-backed chair at one side of the room. It was so placed that the chairs of the three of them formed very nearly an equilateral triangle.

She had sat down, evidently ready with words, but waiting for the doctor to speak first, when she saw Nathan. She gasped, her cheeks paling and her eyes upon the ropes. There was an urgent question in the swift look that she flashed toward the physician.

"Dr. Armstrong! What is it?" she cried. She rose and stepped hesitatingly in the direction of the prisoner. "Nathan! Speak to me, dear!"

"Let's hear what Dr. Armstrong has to say, Grace," said Barclay, striving to hold his voice to a semblance of naturalness.

"Sit down, Miss Rowland!" exclaimed the doctor, rising and waving her back with a brusk gesture. "Your betrothed is quite normal and unharmed—as yet!"

It needed no more than the sinister delivery of those last two words to warn her, to make her understand that she had been trapped, and that both she and Nathan Barclay were in danger. Perhaps anger, or loathing, or love for Barclay gave her in a measure power to defy the ape-like figure at the desk; for she looked at him steadily. He grinned complacently, fingering the pistol.

"Miss Rowland is going to be my wife," he announced, as calmly as if he were prescribing for a patient. "I have arranged means to make sure of her consent. Only if she is stubborn will she irretrievably disgrace herself and cause the immediate death of Mr. Barclay."

He finished with a flourish of pride in his own words, and waited for the effect upon the others.

"You beast!" said the girl in a low voice. "Now I know why you look like one!"

"He can't do it, Grace!" cried Barclay thickly. "He may kill me, but he can't coerce you—"

"Stop!" The physician spoke as he would have spoken to Nero, the ape. "I want no abuse and no protests from an unscientific mind like yours. I shall deal with Miss Rowland!"

Barclay restrained himself, and tried to convey to his betrothed, by a look, that it would be the part of discretion for her to let the doctor go on unopposed for the moment. Whether or not she understood his warning shake of the head, she did hold back the flood of words that seemed trembling on her lips.

"It is not yet late, Grace!" Dr. Armstrong smirked at the use of her Christian name. "We will go to your parson here and be married this evening. Or, if he will not consent to perform the ceremony out of his very great regard for me, we will drive over to Skeeneville. I know that a ten-dollar bill will make the dominie there forget whatever he may have heard about me. In the mean time Barclay will remain here under the care of Nero—to be liberated only when you return as my wife and set him free."

"Are you mad?" cried Nathan. "She can appeal for help to the first man she sees, and you and your ape will be mobbed before morning!"

"Ah, but she won't!" The physician caressed his stock complacently. "I know how to take advantage of superstition. Grace will swear solemnly before the God she bows to, and upon the Bible she believes in, that she will keep faith in letter and in spirit!"

"And if I won't swear?" whispered the girl, taking a step toward him.

"Nathan Barclay will die of strangulation where he sits!" Out of the immensity of his egotism the doctor almost beamed upon them. "Of strangulation, so that when he is found hanging from yonder hook, which I have had placed in the ceiling as for a candelabrum, the authorities will believe your story that he hanged himself in your presence while I was out seeking a nurse for him!"

"My story?" she echoed. Then, as if the strange horror of the situation were overcoming her, she pressed her clenched hands against her cheeks and cried to Nathan: *"What does he mean?"*

"What he says!" triumphed Dr. Armstrong, moving out from his desk. "For I shall mesmerize you, Grace, and you will become a breathing, moving, speaking automaton—and subject to my will! I defy any of them, even the black-browed parson, to get the truth out of you or probe the affair deeper than I choose!"

"You can't!" she shrieked. "I won't let you!"

"I can!"

He spoke to Grace as he spoke to the ape, and sent her cowering back against the wall. Then he turned away slowly, with a shrug, and barked a command to Nero. The animal shuffled from the fireside to the space between Barclay's chair and the desk. Dr. Armstrong, moving with deliberation, took a neatly coiled length of rope from a drawer and tossed it to Nero, whose paws caught it and curled about it as if they were used to the feel of rope.

"Don't promise, Grace! Don't promise!" shouted Barclay hoarsely, as he flung himself against his bonds in a final desperate effort to get at his captor. "Better anything than that!"

The doctor laughed. He spoke to the ape, made a movement with his hands, and nodded in the direction of Barclay. His gesture had made unmistakable the method

"OH, GOD! DELIVER US—" "THERE IS NO GOD!" ROARED THE DOCTOR

by which the prisoner was to die. The ape was to apply the rope to his victim's throat, after the manner of the bowstring.

As Nathan strained and panted and fought against the ropes that held him in his chair, Nero padded nearer, chattering. Then the animal hesitated.

"Nero!" growled Armstrong, with a note of menace in his voice.

The physician reached behind him and took a dog-whip from the litter on his desk. As he menaced the ape, the animal's teeth bared as they had earlier in the evening, and again his hideous face was knotted by a terrible hatred.

The sound of Grace's voice drifted into Barclay's overwrought consciousness. She was praying.

"Oh, God! Deliver us—"

"An idle superstition! There is no God!" roared the doctor in a burst of rage; and he brought the whip down across the face of his ape.

It seemed to Nathan Barclay that Nero leaped into the air to meet his master's cruel blow. The new manila rope flashed in the candle-light, and settled like a snake about the greasy satin stock of Dr. Jacob Armstrong. The iron arms of the ape swiftly drew it taut with a strangling grip.

Then began a silent dance of death over the thick carpet and among the massive pieces of furniture in the doctor's office, while Barclay pulled and even bit at his bonds. He saw Grace flung back from an effort to interfere in Nero's struggle with his master; saw her lean against the wall, half stunned.

His pocket ripped down at last, and his knife was in his hand, the blade open. The ropes fell away, and he leaped across the room, knife in hand, to the now still forms

AS NATHAN STRAINED AND PANTED NERO PADDED NEARER, CHATTERING

of ape and man, lying where they had crashed down a moment before in the space behind the desk.

Nero got to his feet and moved away slowly, before Barclay could reach him, letting his arms fall harmlessly to his sides. Nathan knelt down beside the doctor, only to rise quickly and turn to Grace.

"Too late to save him!" he said. "I was well tied!"

Into the face of the girl, horror-stricken though it was, had come again the radiance of her unfettered self.

"Come, Nathan!" she said. "I am free!"

And together they went out of the house of Dr. Jacob Armstrong, while the ape, which his intelligence had sought to make its evil agent, stood chattering and masterless by the dead physician's chair.

THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE

ROMANCE is what the world once was,
And what the world shall be,
And what the world is now for those
That have the eyes to see.

It is the feather in the cap,
The dream-light in the eye,
All that is done for faith and fun,
The gallant do-or-die.

It sailed with Drake for England's sake,
And with the Spaniard, too;
In blazing noon or haunted moon
It works its derring-do.

On minsters old it lays its hand,
And castles wrecked with glory;
With flag unfurled it fronts the world
From New York's topmost story.

It manned the wandering barks of Tyre,
The keels of Greece and Rome,
Flamed from the viking's funeral pyre,
And brought the corn-ships home.

Its throbbing engines plow the deep,
Its motors cleave the air;
The desert blossoms as the rose
Because romance is there;
O'er blackest hell it casts its spell,
And makes the sternest fair.

On youth and age alike it smiles,
On men who win or lose;
It garlands all the weariest miles
With blossoms and with dews.

Romance is girl, romance is boy,
Romance is eighty-five;
Romance is every hour that we
Are splendidly alive!

Andrew McIver Adams

Gloria and the Garden of Sweden

BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Illustrated by Irma Deremeaux

IT was one of those gilded October days, when the serene sunshine is as soft and tawny as candle-light; when the air is thin and sharp in the early mornings, but the noontime is as comfortably genial as the radiance of a hearth reddened with hickory embers. Dove Dulcet and I were strolling along Riverside Park, enjoying the blue elixir of the afternoon, in which there was just a faint prick, a gently tangible barb of the coming arrows of the North.

"Winter sharpens her spear-heads," said Dulcet.

"Aye," was my reply. Below us I saw the coaling-station at the Seventy-Ninth Street pier. "The merriest music the householder can hear nowadays is the roar of coal going down the chute into the cellar!"

He sighed, and seemed touched by a sudden melancholy.

"Ben," he said, "that coal-dump reminds me of Gloria Larsen. Did I ever tell you about her?"

"Never," I said. "Coal, I presume, made you think of diamonds; and diamonds, of Miss Larsen. Were you engaged to her?"

"I—well, I might have been," he replied sentimentally.

Before us was an empty bench, on a little knoll that looks out over the shining sweep of the river. I drew him to it, and we filled our pipes. When you can get a minor poet in an autobioloquacious mood, it is well to encourage him. No one takes life so seriously as the minor poet, and consequently his memoirs make fine sport for the disinterested bystander.

"No," he said, blowing a waft of tobacco smoke into the soft, sun-brimmed air and settling down into the curve of the bench. "The association was even more obvious than that of coal and diamonds. I always think of Gloria when winter begins to come in."

"Ah!" I said. "She was cold?"

He meditated, ignoring my jocularity.

II

"IT was a good many years ago," he said at last; "before you knew me. When I first came to town, you know, I had a fine ambition to be a writer. I had just a little money, so I shut myself up in a hall room at the top of a cheap lodging-house on Seventy-Fifth Street, hired a typewriter, and set about to butt my head against all the walls that hem in the beginner.

"It was one of those old four-story dwellings that are now mostly boarding-houses, and it was run by a good-hearted widow who would let her rooms only to men, because she said they were less trouble than women. Her house was clean and incredibly cheap, and almost all the lodgers were young fellows like myself—students, or starveling artists, or chaps with literary ambitions. That was how I had heard of the place, through another fellow who lived there and had built up a little sort of coterie in the house. He was Blackmore. You know his name; he gave up art long ago. He's now the art editor of the *Mother, Home, and Heaven Magazine.*

"Mrs. Vesey, our landlady, was quite a character. I was always rather a favorite with her, because the very first day I came to her house I happened to find her cat, which had wandered away some days before, leaving her disconsolate. The cat's name, I remember, was Nemo. She had called it so because, with that admirable

virginity of mind that one finds only in a childless married woman, she was uncertain of the animal's sex. I only mention Nemo because it was through him that I first talked with Gloria.

"The first day I was at Mrs. Vesey's, I heard her groaning about the vanished cat. That evening I went out to supper, feeling rather lonely, and dropped in at an eccentric-looking little restaurant on Amsterdam Avenue. It was called Larsen's Physical Culture Chop-House, and I have never seen a more amusing place.

WELCOMING ANY PRETEXT FOR PROLONGING THE DISCUSSION, I BORROWED THE PHONE AND STUDIED THE HEART-RENDING CURVES OF GLORIA'S CHIN AND CHEEK AND THROAT

"Old man Larsen was a Swede, and all the Scandinavian fads ran riot in his head—vegetarian food, for instance. He didn't absolutely condemn meat, for he would serve it if you insisted, but all his joy was in weird combinations of calory, proteid, and vitamine, or whatever those things are called. Bean 'cutlets,' and protose 'steak' that turned out, on examination, to be made of chopped walnuts and lentils, and the 'Thousand-Calory Combination Dinner,' of which he made a specialty. When you sat down, if you were a regular customer, old Larsen would come round and look you over and diagnose from your complexion the kind and quantity of calories you needed for that meal, and would give you combinations of spinach croquettes and lentil pie that he warranted would purge the blood and compose the mind. On the walls were charts of Swedish exercises and systems of calisthenics, and he sold a little pamphlet that he himself had written telling how to be strong and merry and full of physique.

"Well, to come back to my first visit to Larsen's restaurant, I hadn't been in there many minutes before I noticed the girl at the cashier's desk. My, my, what a girl! My table was close to her little throne, and I couldn't help watching her out of the end of my eye. I wondered if she was raised entirely on protose and lentils, for I have never seen anything so gloriously and vitally physical in my life. Great, bold blue eyes, and crisp, sparkling golden hair, and blood that spoke delicately through her

skin, and a figure—well, just our old friend of Melos over again, that lively combination of grace and strength. She was just curves and waves and athletic softness—the kind of creature that makes your arms tingle, you know. No corset, I suppose. In the old man's booklet on physical culture he defended the gymnastic doctrine that women should develop what he called a muscle corset by bending and swaying from the hips a thousand times a day. He said it must be done—well, *au naturel,* in front of an open window in one's bedroom in the morning. I'd be ashamed to admit that we fellows at Mrs. Vesey's used to set our alarm clocks at half past six to go round the corner to Amsterdam Avenue—"

Dulcet paused a while and watched the river pensively.

"But about the cat," I reminded him presently.

"Yes," he said. "Well, that first night I was at the restaurant, I noticed a very fine, fat cat browsing about under the tables. I was amused at the corpulence of the animal. I said to myself that a cat as large as that must surely get some meat somewhere, because, while vegetarian protose food may be all right for Swedes, a cat is a realist in the matter of carnal meals. And when I went to the desk to pay my check, wanting some excuse to get into talk with the superb Gloria—who was, of course, the old man's daughter—I remarked on the healthy appearance of her cat.

"'Oh, it's not really ours,' she said. 'It came in here yesterday. I don't know whose it is.'

"'I'll bet I know whose it is,' I said.

"I told her that Mrs. Vesey, who ran the bachelor lodging-house on Seventy-Fifth Street, had lost her Nemo. She listened with interest, those thrilling blue eyes sizing me up in a keen, humorous way.

"'I shouldn't wonder it's hers,' she said.

"Welcoming any pretext for prolonging the discussion, I borrowed the phone at Gloria's elbow, and, studying the heart-rending curves of her chin and cheek and throat, I called up Mrs. Vesey and told her I thought I had found her pet. Mrs. Vesey hurried round to the restaurant, and swept up the vagabond Nemo with cries of joy into her lean and affectionate bosom. Nemo purred, and I escorted Mrs. Vesey home, recapitulating in my mind the perfect contours of the girl's heavenly form. My enthusiasm was even such that when the other men came in I could not refrain from telling them all about her. I saw that I had made a mistake, for instantly Blackmore swore he would get her to sit for him.

III

"Of course, from that time on, the Physical Culture Chop-House became the nightly haunt of our little party. The other men had seen it many times, but the vegetarian threats in the window had frightened them away. Now, none of us dared be absent very many dinners, for fear the rest would gain some advantage with the girl.

"I cannot give you any conception of the humorous glamour of that time unless I insist that she was the most superbly luscious thing I have ever glimpsed; and one sees a good many covetable creatures on the streets of New York. Some of them said she was cold; that in spite of all the nutritious algebra printed on old Larsen's menus—he used to put down all sorts of preposterous formulas about starch, and albumen, and prosphorus, and proteids, and so on—she was lacking in calories. But I know that when we sat at table, and she came round to ask if everything was all right, and leaned over us with her clear eyes, as blue as a special-delivery stamp, and that cream-white neck, and the faint glimmer of a blue ribbon shining through the hilly slope of her blouse—oh, well, Ben, we were young, and we ate red meat for lunch, anyway.

"I guess old man Larsen, who spent most of his time in the kitchen, encouraged her to kid us along, for he never seemed to mind our open admiration of his daughter. He probably saw that she was a bigger business asset than any number of calory charts. Every now and then he would come out and chin with us, for our party became a nightly event in the café. Before long we had sampled every kind of vegetarian combination on the list, and had him busy inventing new ones. We used to ask him if he had raised a girl like that on nothing but vegetables, and he would laugh and swear that Gloria had never tasted blood until she was sixteen.

"It seemed queer to us that the restaurant wasn't full of her suitors. I should have thought, with a girl like her, they'd have been standing in line waiting for a look at her. I suppose that people who

feed on nothing but vegetables are not very strong on such things. It's an odd thing, but I've always noticed that most of the people who frequent these crank physical culture and dietetic eating-places are a queer, sick-looking lot—youths with rolling Adam's apples, and sallow, soup-stained girls. Certainly our little gang, so very jovial and fancy-free, made a quaint contrast to most of the patrons of the house. In a few days we felt as if we owned the place, and had the old man slide two tables together just underneath Gloria's cash register, where we met every evening for dinner.

"As for Larsen, he was a crank on many subjects, but he was no fool. He was an athletic, erect fellow, with a bristling gray mustache and cropped hair and a forcible gray eye. On the wall was a huge photo of him in a kind of Sandow pose, with a leopard-skin apron round his middle, showing terrific knotty biceps and back muscles. Gloria told us that at one time he had been a physical instructor in the Swedish army, and the head of a *turnverein,* or something of that sort. There was a certain physical and gymnastic candor about him that amused us. He was awfully proud of Gloria, whom he had raised himself—being a widower—according to his own principles. After we had all bought his booklets, and promised to take up his system of calisthenics, he became quite chummy and showed us a lot of photographs of Gloria at different ages, doing her gymnastic exercises, beginning as a little plump Venus and ending as a stunning profile in tights.

"We tried to maintain an attitude of merely scientific detachment toward those pictures, admiring them only as connoisseurs of physical culture; but we ended by begging him for copies, insisting that they would be a useful guide to us in our own private exercising. Larsen said he was keeping them to illustrate a new enlarged edition of his physical culture book. We told him that it would sell a million copies, and I think we all volunteered to act as selling-agents for the book. Annette Kellermann and Susanna Cocroft, we cried, were scarecrows compared to Gloria.

"To all this banter Gloria would listen calmly and unembarrassed, for she had a magnificent unconsciousness of her own superb allurement. We would each try to get a moment alone with her to describe the exercises we were taking, and to ask her advice about our muscular development. I remember that Blackmore, after secret practise that we had not suspected, took the wind out of our sails one evening when some of us were bragging of our accomplishment in bending and touching the floor while standing on tiptoe. He jumped up and caught hold of the lintel of the doorway, and chinned himself on it a dozen times or so. We were all crestfallen by this feat until Gloria came forward—all the other customers had gone home—and did the same thing about twenty times. She went back to her counter with a heavenly flush of pride, while Blackmore dashed to a table and did a little sketch of her from memory, with the lovely lines of her figure silhouetted against the doorway.

"But it was I who was first to think of the subtlest compliment that any one could pay her, which was to ask the privilege of feeling her biceps. And what an arm she had! Not a great fleshy, flabby washerwoman's limb, but the rippling marble of a Greek statue brought to warm life! Blackmore used to sit at meal-times neglecting his protose steak and making sketches of her while she wasn't looking. The best I could do was write verses about her. And while she played no favorites, I think she really gave me a little the inside track, because I talked physical culture with her more seriously than the others, who tried to make love to her a little too baldly.

"By this time she had us all doing calisthenics. The creaky floors of Mrs. Vesey's house used to resound night and morning with the agonies of our gymnastics. There was one exercise that Gloria told us she found particularly helpful. It was to lie down with the feet under a bureau or any other heavy piece of furniture, extend the arms behind the head, and then raise and lower the body a hundred times, pivoting from the waist. This was only one of fifty or more laborious accomplishments that we undertook for the sake of our goddess.

"No woman was ever wooed with more honest pangs, or with more repeated genuflections. As we lay on the floor before going to bed, raising our legs in the air two hundred times, or groaned in some sinew-cracking, twisting contortion devised by the pitiless Swede, it was the vision of Gloria's beauty of snow and rose that gave

us courage. If any passer-by ever looked up at the front of Mrs. Vesey's house in the early mornings, he must have been startled to see a stark white figure near every window, furiously going through the Swedish manual. One of us, we fondly thought, would some day spend a healthy Swedish honeymoon performing these motions in ecstatic company with Gloria; and we did not want to be shamed by her incomparable perfection. If she worshiped bodily symmetry, our goal was nothing less. We wanted to be lithe, supple, very panthers of elasticity and grace. The evening I was able to stand on one leg in the restaurant and proudly raise my other foot to touch a gas-jet some six feet from the floor, I felt that Gloria might some day be mine."

THE BOARDING-HOUSE USED TO RESOUND NIGHT AND MORNING WITH THE AGONIES OF OUR GYMNASTICS

Dove paused again, and seemed to fall into a reminiscent reverie. Unconsciously he stiffly extended one leg in front of him, and I divined that he was inwardly rehearsing that act of calisthenic triumph.

"By gracious," he said, "I've never forgotten the night I got her father's permission to take her to some gymnastic tournament, or something of that sort, down at Madison Square Garden. How annoyed the other men were when they went to the chop-house that night for their evening penance of lentils, and found Gloria absent!

"Yes, it was an odd wooing. I had found the measurements of the Venus de Milo in some Sunday paper, and that night, when we became quite sentimental, I persuaded her to take her own dimensions, so that we could compare the proportions of the two. And we had some very happy little jokes, quite simple ones that she

would understand, about her arms being much more lovely than those of the statue, and that sort of thing. How deliciously she blushed the next day when she gave me her list of measurements, written out on a sheet of paper! Of course, I pretended not to understand which was which. I wrote a little poem about them."

"It seems to me," I said, "that you were getting on very well. What was the trouble? You didn't marry her, did you?"

IV

"OLD man Larsen," he continued gravely, "had a number of other hobbies besides vegetarianism and physical culture. He was a mechanical genius in his way. I remember once, after we had expressed exaggerated admiration of some atrocious compound of lentils and nuts and fruit, Gloria took us through the kitchen to show us an ingenious sandwich-making machine her father had contrived. You fed in loaves of pumpernickel bread and pats of nut butter on one side, hard-boiled eggs and lettuce and dressing on the other, and out came egg-salad sandwiches through a slot, as neat as you could want to see.

"But the best of his inventions was a sort of miniature vacuum cleaner, which the waitresses used for taking the crumbs off the tables. You've seen those little hot-air pistols they use at swell shoe-shining stands, to dry the liquid cleanser off your shoes before they put on the polishing-paste? Well, Larsen's decrumbing machine, as we used to call it, looked rather like those. You screwed a plug into an electric-light socket, ran the little gun over the table, and in a jiffy it sucked up crumbs and cigarette ashes and spilled lentils and matches, and left the cloth neat. Larsen was so proud of it that he said he was going to patent it.

"I never cared so much for the old man—he was a little too eccentric—and I began to think, after a while, that he used his daughter a little too crudely as a business bait; but he was full of ideas. He had a big motor-truck that he used to cruise around town in, visiting the markets himself, to get the pick of the vegetables; and he was always tinkering with that truck, planning new mechanical tricks of some kind. He had an insatiable curiosity, too. He used to sit down at the table with us sometimes, late in the evening, and ask about our work, and where we lived, and what Mrs. Vesey was like, and what time of day we were home, and all sorts of fool questions like that.

"Well, the time went on, and it began to be cold weather. I noticed this sooner than the other fellows, I think, because whereas most of them went to offices during the daytime, I stayed home at Mrs. Vesey's, trying to write in my narrow coop of a top bedroom. You know how depressing an instrument a typewriter is when your hands are cold. I haven't forgotten some dreary vigils I had up there, struggling to write short stories. Sometimes I used to give it up weakly, and go round to Larsen's, where it was always warm and cozy, to drink herb coffee and eat those brittle Swedish biscuits and chat with Gloria. I used to complain to her about the cold in my room, and she would laugh and say that I just ought to try a winter in Sweden.

"'Swedish exercises,' she would say. 'That's the thing to stir up your blood! They'll keep you warm.'

"And then, in her enchanting way, she would tell me a new one, and if there were no customers—as there generally weren't in the middle of the afternoon—she would illustrate how it should be done. Sometimes she would even allow me what she called a Swedish kiss—a very fleeting and provocative embrace; and then I would show her my new perfection in doing the backward stoop, or some such muscular oddity, and return to my cold citadel.

"But in spite of the fact that we were all busy much of the time going through the manual of exercises, presently the chill of Mrs. Vesey's lodgings became severe. Mrs. Vesey was a rather obstinate and frugal old dear, and she herself dwelt down in the kitchen, where her big gas-range kept her comfortable. When we complained of the cold, she had all sorts of excuses for postponing lighting the furnace. There was a big coal strike that year, and she was quite right in suspecting that once her present supply was exhausted it would be very hard to get more. Also, she said, her furnace man had quit, but she was hunting for another. On one pretext or another, she kept on putting us off, until finally it was mid November, and we were doing our exercises in rooms where our breath showed like clouds of fog. And then one day Mrs. Vesey came up in great glee to say that a coal man had called that very morning, of

his own accord, and had offered to give her five tons. She had promptly snapped at the chance, and he had put the coal in the cellar; so we should have heat the very next day, when the new furnace man was expected.

"Naturally we were all cheered by this good news. We sped round to Larsen's restaurant in high spirits, and adored our divinity with more than usual abandon.

"'Now my fingers will be warm again, Gloria,' I said, 'I'll be able to write some more poems about you.'

"'Yes,' cried Blackmore, 'and now it will be warm enough for you to come and pose for me in my lovely attic at Mrs. Vesey's. If you had come before, I should have called my painting "The Chilblain Venus."'

"'Silly boys!' said Gloria, with that delicious, soft Swedish accent which I can't even try to imitate. 'You are hot-blooded enough as it is. You don't need all that warming up. Look at us vegetarians; you make fun of us, but our lentils keep our blood circulating. Try the Brussels sprouts; they are full of calories.'

"'Ah!' we shouted. 'But you seem to keep this place warm enough!'

"Old Larsen, who passed through the room just then, broke in crossly:

"'We have to, for the sake of the customers,' he said. 'Gloria, stop fooling with the gentlemen and attend to business.' He seemed in a bad humor that night.

"The next day must have been some sort of holiday, for I know we all went out to see a football game. We got back about supper-time and found the house perishing chill. With shouts and protests we called Mrs. Vesey from her kitchen, but she explained that the expected furnace man had not turned up.

"'Well,' said Blackmore, 'this can't go on any longer. Mrs. Vesey, I'll go down and light the fire myself. We'll take turns and keep it going till your man comes.'

"He ran down to the basement, but a minute later he was up again.

"'Mrs. Vesey,' he shouted, 'what is all this nonsense? Are you kidding us? There's no coal down there at all!'

"'No coal?' she exclaimed. 'Why, there was a good three or four tons, and the man said he put five tons more in yesterday. I heard him do it—never heard such a noise in my life. I paid him ten dollars a ton.'

"'Impossible!' Blackmore cried angrily. 'There's not enough down there to fry Nemo with. About three shovelfuls, that's all. What is this—some kind of a game to freeze us out?'

"Mrs. Vesey wrung her hands, and we all ran down to the cellar. It was as Blackmore had said. The bins were empty, save for a few lumps."

Dove gazed down thoughtfully at the coal office on the pier below us, where a wagon was loading.

"On a mellow afternoon like this," he said, "coal doesn't seem quite so pressing a concern; but I tell you, in a bleak boarding-house about Thanksgiving time, with no heat of any sort available but a gas-jet, it is a different matter. We were an angry and puzzled lot that night. Mrs. Vesey protested so pitifully that there had been coal in the bins only the day before, and asserted so repeatedly that she had heard the noise of it going in, that we could not help believe her. She promised to call up her coal man the first thing the next morning, and we also agreed to go round and visit him in a body, to add our personal appeals; but how on earth several tons of coal could have been stolen out of the cellar without any one hearing it seemed to us a mystery.

V

"THE next morning we visited the coal-dealer *en masse*—in a coalition, as Blackmore said — and by spirited imprecation and paying cash we extracted a promise to have a couple of tons sent at once. His office was some distance up on Columbus Avenue, and on our way back we passed through one of the cross streets—Eighty-Third, I think it was, because one of us wanted to get some stamps at the post-office. As we came along, we heard the rumble of coal passing down a chute, and saw a coal-wagon in the distance.

"'There's somebody in luck!' said one.

"'But what an odd-looking coal-wagon!' said another, as we approached.

"It was a large motor-truck with a hinged metal top, something like a huge street-cleaning cart. The engine was throbbing, and the coal was roaring noisily in the chute, which led down into the cellar window of a brownstone dwelling. The chute, instead of being the customary shallow trough, was a large circular pipe, so that we could not actually see the coal

pouring downward, but only hear it crashing through the metal tube. That struck me as a good idea for preventing the coal-dust from spreading over everything near.

"But we were all interested not only in the odd appearance of the truck, but in the extraordinary din it caused. Delivering coal is never a silent job, naturally; but this racket was really terrific. The driver seemed to have left his engine running full tilt, and the whole truck quivered and shook with the power. We stood amazed at the furious rattle and uproar. The noise was too great for spoken words to be caught, but I pointed out the circular chute to Blackmore. It was made in telescoping sections, to slide into itself, and was an interesting novelty.

THE EVENING I WAS ABLE TO KICK A GAS-JET SOME SIX FEET FROM THE FLOOR, I FELT THAT GLORIA MIGHT SOME DAY BE MINE

"It occurred to me that this dealer, whoever he might be—there was no name on

the truck—could perhaps let Mrs. Vesey have some coal. We could see the feet of the driver, who was standing on the other side of the truck, and I went round to speak to him. He was a stocky man with a flowing bush of black beard and wearing a suit of very grimy overalls. At the top of my voice I yelled:

"'Got any coal to sell?'

"He shook his head in a surly way and turned his back on me.

"I could not tell from his gesture whether he had answered my question, or was indicating that he could not hear; so I shouted at him again.

NONE OF US DARED BE ABSENT VERY MANY DINNERS, FOR FEAR THE REST WOULD GAIN SOME ADVANTAGE WITH THE GIRL

"At the same time I noticed Blackmore and the others gathered at the cellar window, looking in curiously over the slope of the delivery pipe. The coal man seized a lever and shut off his power, for the engine stopped, and after a little sliding and rumbling in the tube the racket ceased. He picked up a shovel and ran to the group by the chute.

"'Here, let that alone!' he cried angrily.

"'Keep your shirt on,' said Blackmore. 'We're just looking at this outfit of yours. It makes a devil of a noise. Regular public nuisance, I call it!'

"'It's none of your affair,' said the man. 'Keep out of what don't concern you.'

"He returned to his truck, pulled a handle, and the roar of the coal began again. I was standing near him, while the others were on the opposite side of the wagon, so I was the only one to see a curious thing. There were several revolving cog-wheels at the side of the truck, and in his irritation, I suppose, the driver stooped over them too closely. At any rate his beard caught in the cogs, and I gave a cry of dismay, thinking he would be cruelly hurt. To my amazement the beard was whisked quickly from his face, and I saw that he was Larsen. He looked at me with an expression of alarm and anger that was laughable.

"'When did you turn coal-dealer?' I shouted.

"But at this moment Blackmore, who was still bending over the chute, sprang up and ran around to us. He, too, was staggered to see the identity of the driver. He dragged me a few paces away and shouted in my ear.

"'Damn queer business,' he said. 'That coal isn't going in. It's coming out!'

"'What the deuce do you mean?' I said.

"'Just what I say. He's got some sort of a suction engine in that truck, a kind of big vacuum cleaner, and he's simply siphoning the coal out of somebody's cellar.'

"Larsen ran at us with a big spanner in his hand, but we grappled with him, and while three of us held him the others examined the truck. What Blackmore had told us was perfectly true. By an ingenious gasoline pump installed in the wagon the rascal was drawing out the coal. Looking into the top of the wagon through a little glass peephole, we

could see the black nuggets coming swiftly up out of the chute.

"By this time a little crowd had gathered, and the lady of the house ran out to see what was happening. I think she thought we were trying to seduce her coal supply. She explained angrily to us that Larsen had driven up to her door half an hour before and offered to sell her several tons of coal. Her cellar, like every one else's, was none too well stocked, and she had been delighted to agree.

"While we were wondering just what to do, Larsen, who had been glaring wickedly at us, broke away from our grasp and reversed his machinery so that the coal began to thunder back honestly into the cellar. The puzzled woman, not suspecting anything wrong, went back indoors after we made some impromptu explanation for the fuss. Larsen's amputated black beard whirled round and round, still adhering to the rolling cogs, as we watched, while he stood by sullenly. We walked away down the block to hold a council, and also to let the group of mystified onlookers disperse. Of course, our first thought was to go for the police; but then we thought of Gloria."

VI

Dove sighed, and tapped out his long-expired pipe.

"Well," he said, "that's pretty near the end of the story. I'm afraid association with beauty blunts the sense of rectitude. No, we didn't do anything about it, except see to it that Larsen put back that coal in the cellar. I suppose we were really accessory to a misdemeanor, because we gathered from some small paragraphs we saw in the papers that a number of householders in that neighborhood had been mysteriously robbed of their coal.

"To tell you the truth, we couldn't bear the thought of taking any action that would ruin Gloria's happiness. What were a few tons of black, filthy coal compared to that serene and golden-white beauty of hers, like some princess in a Norse fairy tale? The old man was a lunatic, we supposed, and would come to grief sooner or later. We were not going to be the ones to bring humiliation upon her.

"We walked back, stricken, to our lodgings; and as we passed the Physical Culture Chop-House we looked furtively through the window. We could see Gloria laying the tables for lunch, the tall, strong curve of her back as she leaned over, her capable white hands smoothing the cloth. None of us had the heart to go in.

"We clubbed together to pay for Mrs. Vesey's new supply of coal, although it broke our pocketbooks for the next month or so. We were too hard up, then, to go on eating at Larsen's. We had to patronize a lunch-counter instead, where we gloomed over frankfurters and beans and quarreled with one another, in sheer misery, as to which one of us Gloria had really liked best. We never saw her again, because about a week later the Larsen café shut up, and they disappeared."

"And the calisthenics?" I said. "Did you go on with those?"

"No," he said; "we were too melancholy. Also, as soon as Mrs. Vesey's coal arrived, we didn't need to. That was the terrible part of it. You see, Gloria had simply egged us on to do those exercises so that we wouldn't feel the chill when her father stole the coal. I'm afraid she was as guilty as he was."

We got up from our bench, for the afternoon air was growing bleak.

"Now you know," he said, "why that coal-dump down there reminds me of Gloria. Well, it was wonderful while it lasted—until, as you might say, the serpent drove us out of our Garden of Sweden."

BEGGARS

Young Love once came beseeching,
Upon a sunny day;
I looked at him and laughed at him,
Then gaily turned away.

To-day, with heart a breaking
And eyes with tears all wet,
I turned to Love, entreating him;
But Love could not forget!

Edgar Daniel Kramer

The Evanston Community Kitchen

HOW THE WOMEN OF A PROGRESSIVE ILLINOIS CITY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO SOLVE THE TROUBLESOME PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC SERVICE BY ORGANIZED COOPERATION

By Robert H. Moulton

THE present scarcity of domestic servants has confronted thousands of American women with a new and difficult problem in household economics. Many families have been driven to take their main meal of the day in hotels or public dining-rooms, instead of at their own fireside, much as they may prefer the privacy of their own homes.

What seems to be a much more satisfactory solution has been found at Evanston, Illinois, where a group of householders has combined to establish a community kitchen. Though it can hardly be said, as yet, to have stood the test of time, the experiment appears to be definitely successful, and committees of women from numerous cities throughout the country have visited Evanston to see just how it was done. The result of their observation has made them enthusiastic on the subject, and they have invariably departed with the conviction that what has been accomplished in Evanston can be done elsewhere.

Evanston has always—and justly—considered itself a city of light and leading. As the reader probably knows, it is practically a residential suburb of Chicago, fronting on Lake Michigan a few miles north of the busy metropolis of the Middle West. It is the home of many prominent people, and is widely known as the seat of the Northwestern University and the headquarters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

The institution described in the present article is a direct outgrowth of the war activities of the Evanston Woman's Club. In the summer of 1918, when the whole world was conserving food with all its might and main, this club opened a kitchen for preserving fruits and vegetables. Here seven thousand jars of preserves were turned out, half of which were given to the various charitable institutions of the town. The rest was sold, and not only was the original capital of five hundred dollars returned untouched, but a profit of two hundred and fifty dollars was turned over to the club's War Emergency Fund.

Late in October of the same year, when the epidemic of influenza reached northern Illinois, the Woman's Club decided to conserve again—not food this time, but human life. Accordingly, a committee composed of Mrs. Rufus C. Dawes, Mrs. James A. Odell, and Mrs. Homer H. Kingsley was authorized to establish an emergency kitchen for the purpose of furnishing meals to families in which the usual providers were stricken by the disease, and for which no other help was available. For several weeks this emergency kitchen operated in the Woman's Club, serving an average of two hundred meals daily, catering not only to the ill and convalescent, but to their entire households.

The success of these two ventures inspired a general feeling of confidence in the ladies who had conducted them, and in the winter of 1919-1920 they were urged to do something along the same line. The shortage of domestic help suggested the establishment of an organized system for the preparation and distribution of cooked food, and a short time later a permanent community kitchen came into existence. Within a few months the kitchen was de-

livering five hundred hot dinners a week to private homes, with a constantly increasing list of patrons.

The delivery of cooked food from central kitchens is no more revolutionary than the city laundry, which has to so great a degree supplanted the home wash-tub, or the village bakery, which has largely taken the place of the home oven. Of course, such a service is not intended for every type of home. It is not needed by people of large means, who can keep a retinue of servants, and who can obtain them even in these days of scarcity, because work is specialized in such homes. It is not needed by people who have competent help, nor can it be used, as a rule, by those whose means are so limited that they can afford no service.

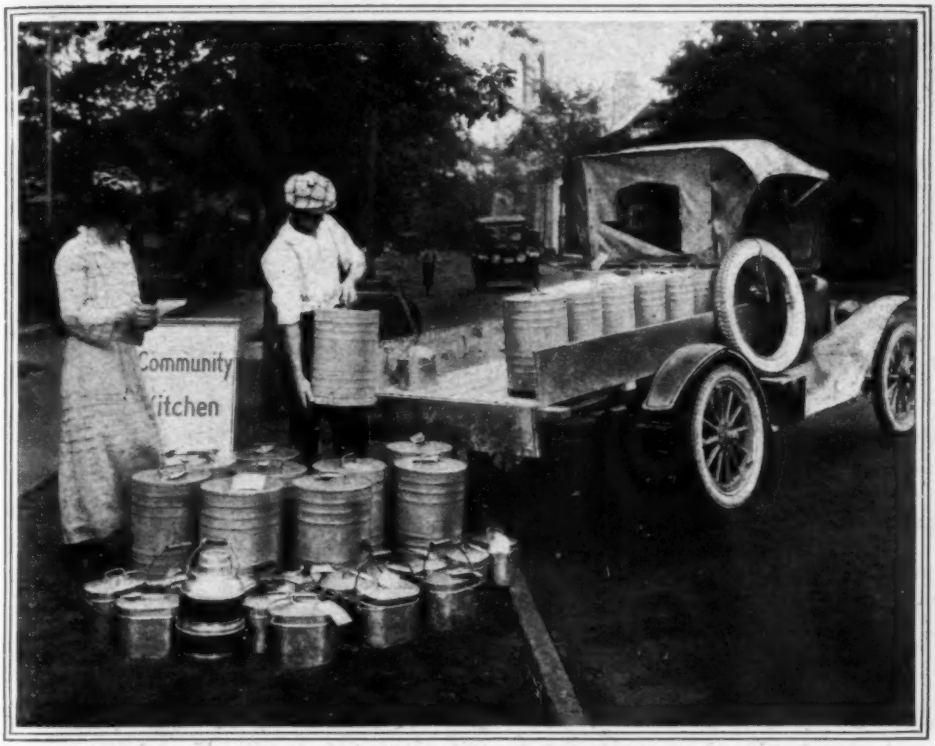
But for that large group who under normal conditions can afford to keep a competent maid, but cannot now obtain one, who can afford to pay for nourishing, well-balanced meals, but are too busy to prepare them—to such this service is a blessing. Moreover, it makes home life possible for the business woman and increases her health and efficiency by providing a hot, palatable meal instead of a hastily prepared snack after her day in office, shop, or factory.

AN EFFICIENT DELIVERY SYSTEM

Realizing that the success of a cooked-food service largely depends upon the efficiency of the container in which the food is delivered, the committee in charge of the Evanston kitchen investigated the various devices then on the market. As none of these exactly met the demands of the situation, orders were given for the design of a special container. The result was the development of what is declared to be the neatest, most sanitary, and most efficient article of the kind that has yet been produced.

This new container is composed of six parts—the base, four glass-lined metal inserts, and the insulated cover. The inserts are so designed that they may be filled

PREPARING AND PACKING FOOD IN THE EVANSTON COMMUNITY KITCHEN—ON THE CENTRAL TABLE ARE THE INSERTS, OR GLASS-LINED METAL DISHES, IN WHICH THE COOKED FOOD IS PLACED FOR DELIVERY TO THE SUBSCRIBERS



PLACING THE LOADED CONTAINERS IN A MOTOR-VAN FOR DELIVERY TO HOUSEHOLDS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF EVANSTON

separately and assembled upon the base, semi-nested one upon the other. The cover is dropped over them all and clamped securely to the base, giving double heat insulation, and making a strong, durable package that can be safely transported from the Community Kitchen to the home several hours in advance of the time at which the food is to be actually used. Each insert is a glass-lined metal dish especially designed to be transferred directly from the container to the table. Furthermore, each one is an independent insulated unit, which alone has a heat efficiency of two hours when outside of the insulated jacket, or carrying package.

The kitchen in the Evanston Woman's Club building is modern in every respect. It employs from six to eight cooks, and only experts are engaged, one specializing in salads, another in pastry, and so on. When the food has been cooked, it is placed steaming hot in the containers. Separate containers are used for ice-cream and foods which are to be kept cold. Each family receiving these daily dinners owns its own containers, which are picked up each morning and returned to the kitchen.

A typical meal from the Community Kitchen may consist of chicken pie, mashed potatoes, string beans, fresh fruit cup, and cake; or of baked fish, potato, parsley, combination salad, and apple dumplings with hot sauce. In winter a soup is added. It is taken for granted that bread, butter, coffee, and milk can be furnished in each home, hence these items do not form a part of the regular meal from the kitchen. The prices charged are—or recently were—eighty-five cents per person on week-days, one dollar on Sundays.

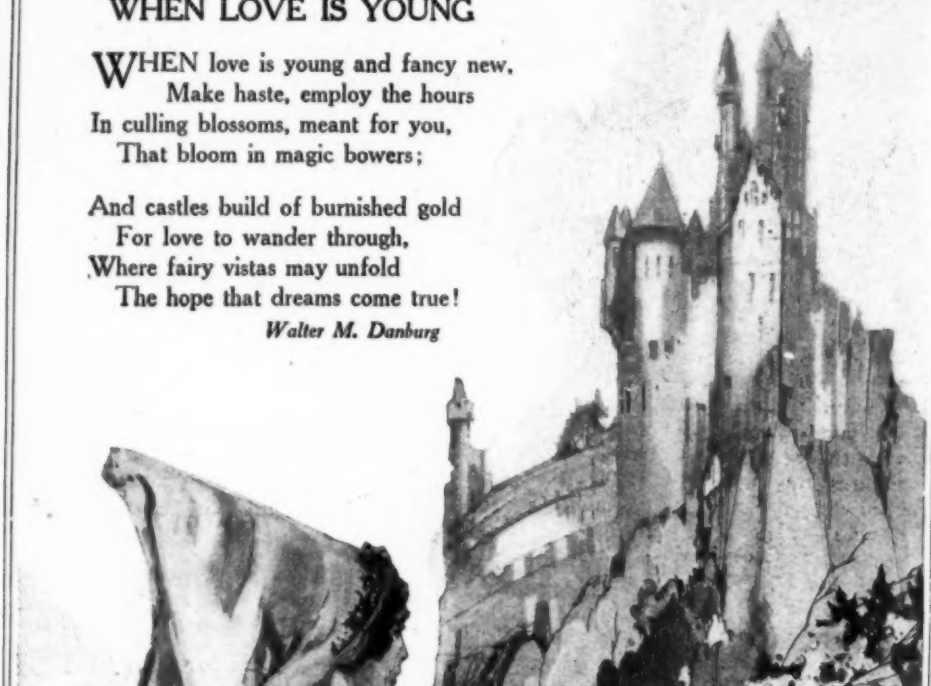
The menu is changed from night to night, but no family knows what it will receive until the container is opened and the meal served. As far as possible, however, cognizance is taken of individual preferences. For example, those who do not like veal can notify the kitchen not to send them that particular meat. This plan has given general satisfaction, and almost every one who has tried the community dinners has become a regular patron.

WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG

WHEN love is young and fancy new,
Make haste, employ the hours
In culling blossoms, meant for you,
That bloom in magic bowers;

And castles build of burnished gold
For love to wander through,
Where fairy vistas may unfold
The hope that dreams come true!

Walter M. Danburg



Bjornson's Woman

BY HOWARD ERICKSON

Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer

I HAD come unwillingly enough to see old Bjornson. I would not have come at all, but for my aunt's insistence that I should pay the call as an errand of duty to the dying man, whose dead wife was my father's cousin. Even the most remote of blood ties were binding in my aunt's eyes. She said it would be shameful for me to drive twelve miles to town and not go a few minutes' ride farther to see a miserable old man who had been given up by the doctors. Besides, I could put my horses in his stable, and save a livery bill and the price of a meal.

Having unhitched and fed my team, I followed the trim boarded walk from the little red barn through a back yard of closely cropped bluegrass and carefully groomed rows of potatoes to the low, square house standing in modest whiteness in the bright sunshine.

I did not need to knock, for Mrs. Bjornson had seen me coming. The kitchen door opened, and the woman stood in the areaway, wiping steaming hands on a spotless apron. Her light, straight hair was pulled back from her brow and temples and rolled into a hard knot behind. My earliest recollection of Hansine Bjornson had been that tightly twisted knot of hair. She was short and dumpy, and she wore her clothes as she did her hair—close-fitting, but with the cleanliness and order that characterized everything about her.

A smile played over the thick, hard features and sallow folds of her face, but did not light the faded, tired blue of her eyes, which told of a woman passing into bitter, hopeless, unloved old age.

Her life had been bleak and full of sorrow, I reflected, as she stood there drying her hands. Her parents had cast her off because of an unfortunate marriage to a worthless youth, who deserted her after burdening her with the care of a child. She had been obliged by poverty to give her baby to strangers, renouncing all claim upon it. Later she became the wife of a drunkard, who abused her habitually until one day he fell into a well and was drowned —an ironical fate enough, considering the aversion he had for water for toilet as well as for drinking purposes. Then old Bjornson married her for a housekeeper, as he brutally told her at the time, and never permitted her afterward to forget.

"Look out, a fly!" she warned, as she ushered it out of the house and let me in. She took my hand in her flabby grasp. "Bjornson is very sick. The doctor he sayed he vill not get vell. He sayed he may die any minute."

Her voice was tense, but she did not sob or shed a tear. Hers was a stoic breast that suffered without parade of wo.

"Come and see him," she added. "You can talk to him vile I get dinner ready."

She led me through the immaculate kitchen charged with the delicious odor of carrot and cabbage soup—a concoction that none could bring to such perfection as could Mrs. Bjornson. The scent blended divinely with the aroma of boiling coffee. Behind the glass door of the cupboard stood a white frosted cake that made the muscles of my mouth twitch.

Stepping off the bare but severely scrubbed kitchen floor, I entered the parlor, with its cheap carpet bearing figures of flowers woven in its surface that would defy the best of botanists to identify. A leather rocking-chair, in which I had reclined in childhood, stood beside a center table, on which lay a family album and the single book the house afforded, with the words "Holy Bible" gilt-traced on the leathern cover.

On the walls was paper adorned with designs of hideous birds. In the place of honor was suspended a framed photograph

of a severe, bearded person—" the pastor." On the opposite side of the room were pictures of two women in the quaint, plain fashions of long ago. They were earlier wives of Bjornson. A grinning youth, with shifty eyes and a mouth wide enough ajar to expose blackened teeth, looked out of a miniature frame reposing on a sewing-machine.

Mrs. Bjornson paused at the closed door of the bedroom, from which sounded an impatient:

" Voman!"

Her eyes rested on the likeness of the grinning boy with a glance of hatred.

" Bjornson is breaking his heart because he "—with another envenomed dart at the grinning face—" do not come over to see him, the bum! He has not been over to visit his father, though he knows Bjornson is dying and vants so bad to see him. Yesterday he made me carry the picture out from the bedroom."

She placed her hand on the porcelain knob of the sick-room door, but did not turn it.

" He heard you come in. He t'inks it is Yon. You hear how anxious he is for us to go in by him. It vill make him feel so bad to see it is you."

The white knob revolved slowly in her hand. The door swung open, and we made our way into the dimly lighted chamber. I could make out the red bed-pillars and a white expanse in which was set a pallid, ghastly face. Two sea-green eyes gleamed beneath hairy brows like the orbs of a cat in darkness.

" Yon! Is it you?" came the hoarse voice of Bjornson.

I tried to speak and undeceive him, but I could not find means of articulation.

For answer I released the shade half-way to the top of the window, letting in a flood of yellow sunshine that tinted the white walls and dark-painted floor with a mockery of cheer.

The eagerness in the sick man's face turned to an expression of despair; but the stern, hard, wrinkled countenance struggled powerfully to hide the crushing disappointment I knew Bjornson felt.

He reached out a gaunt arm and took my hand weakly, in spite of my insistence that he should refrain from useless exhaustion of his strength. For there could be no greeting to Bjornson without the inevitable hand-shake of the sons of Scandinavia

I could not take my eyes off that face as it scowled upon the pillow. Except for the ashy hue of impending dissolution and the sunken cheeks and temples, the man before me did not look vastly different from the Bjornson I had seen a thousand times in health and vigor. His form bulked beneath the covers gigantic as of old.

He lay silent, gazing at me steadily, as if I bore a secret concerning him which he could wrest from me by the glassy stare of his sea-green eyes. His wife, who had hurried back into the kitchen to watch the soup, reentered, to my great relief, for I could not find anything but inanities to say while his glance transfixed me so persistently—save only when it wandered to where the enlarged reproduction of the picture of a chubby-faced child stood in a great wooden frame made by Bjornson himself.

The woman tenderly tucked the white sheets about the sick man and whispered solicitously in his ear. He grunted in disgust and watched her impatiently, as if she were an intruder or a stranger.

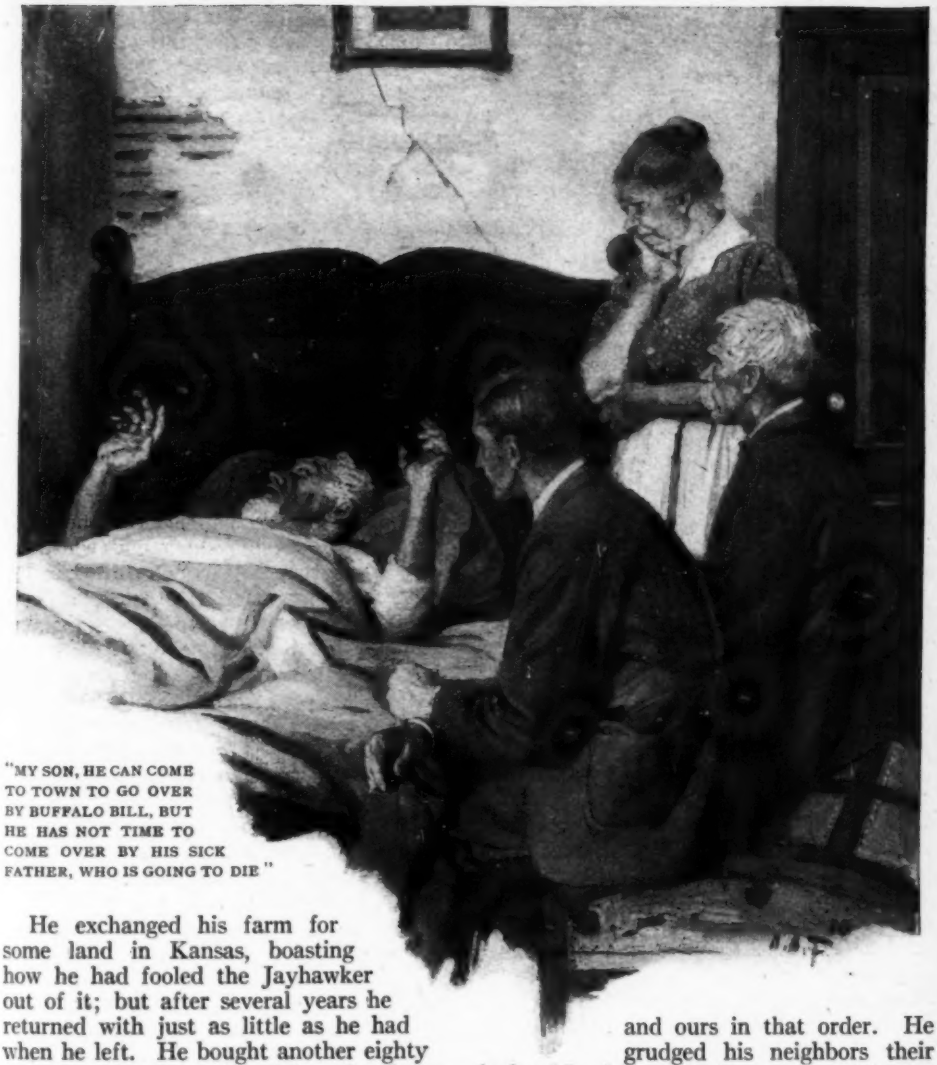
The pathos of the grim old man waiting for his son who did not come moved me less deeply than the tragedy of the wife whose withered heart was yearning for a touch or glance of love or gratitude from this callous, thankless being.

II

As I sat there on the iron-bound trunk that had crossed the sea with Bjornson, his sad and troubled life passed before my eyes in vivid panorama.

He had sought passionately all his days to be " somebody." To be " somebody " meant to have money. Like every European peasant coming to this country, he believed riches awaited him here as confidently as he expected heaven after death. Ill-fortune pursued him, however. While the rest of his compatriots grew prosperous on the virgin sod of our Western land, he remained poor and always in debt. He attributed this to bad luck, but other people said it was because of his trickery and his constant efforts to overreach everybody, even his own friends and kin.

He thought he was smarter than his neighbors. While they were toiling in weeds and mud with their miserable crops, he was busy scheming how to trade off a non-productive milch cow for a good one, or a lame horse for an animal without blemish.



"MY SON, HE CAN COME TO TOWN TO GO OVER BY BUFFALO BILL, BUT HE HAS NOT TIME TO COME OVER BY HIS SICK FATHER, WHO IS GOING TO DIE"

He exchanged his farm for some land in Kansas, boasting how he had fooled the Jayhawker out of it; but after several years he returned with just as little as he had when he left. He bought another eighty near his old one, paying twice what he received for the other. The new place had been neglected, and was poorly improved. Bjornson could not get out of debt or make headway in any direction.

His neighbors, who had started even with him in the beginning, were rich in his estimation, while he was undeniably poor. Their comparative wealth gnawed at his heart and soured still more the acidity of his nature.

Envy was in his mind, I knew, when he asked me about the pigs. Next he wanted to learn about the health of my aunt, my uncle, and my brother, and about the crops. He always made his inquiries concerning us and ours in that order. He grudged his neighbors their luck with pigs, which he never could raise successfully, always thinking these far from hardy brutes could subsist with grass for food, the sky for shelter, and nature to take care of them.

Last of all he asked a question that I knew had been on his lips since he recognized me.

"Did you seen Yon?"

I shook my head. I tried to frame an excuse for "Yon," but I could not lie impromptu to this dying man with the sea-green eyes.

He was the last of Bjornson's blood, that "Yon" whose picture stood on the sewing-machine in the parlor, and the final tragedy

in his father's life. John had disappointed him greatly; was wild, shiftless, a hard drinker, irresponsible, and tricky. That last-named characteristic would not have grieved Bjornson so much if " Yon " had been " smart " in his trickery, as the parent flattered himself that he had been.

John was now renting a farm from a bachelor cousin of his father, who had induced the owner to lease the land to the young man. Bjornson had hopes that the cousin—Mortenson, who was elderly and sickly and had no nearer kin—would make " Yon " his heir; but landlord and tenant did not find themselves congenial. Bjornson, though prejudiced as a father, could not escape seeing that the fault was entirely his son's. It was plain that there was nothing to be expected for John from Mortenson.

All the old man's other efforts to lend his son a hand had ended in similar disaster; but John, though the most persistent, was not the greatest or saddest of Bjornson's disappointments. The heaviest had been Olaf, on whose baby likeness the father's eyes were resting now.

Olaf was the child of his second marriage—his first wife, John's mother, being buried in the " ol' coontry." Olaf's mother had survived her son by only a few months, being the victim of a runaway horse. Bjornson had felt something of an affection for her, but it was mild in comparison with the love he had for her boy.

Olaf had been Bjornson's hope and pride. As John's character developed, the father transferred his affection to the younger brother. Olaf was so " smart." However, there was nothing extraordinary about the youth to eyes other than those of his worshiping sire.

Bjornson was going to make Olaf " a preacher of the Word," the summit of Bjornson's ambition for a son. The minister of his church was the dictator of the social and moral life of the community, as well as being the recipient of a royal salary and living expenses.

Fate smashed to pieces Bjornson's hopes, and with them his heart; for Olaf, at fourteen years of age, ran away from home. He didn't like work or study; he had read lurid tales of the West, and he wanted to go and fight Indians and be a scout or cowboy.

Bjornson, who was a carpenter, and often worked at his craft, was sawing a board on a scaffolding on my uncle's half-finished house when John came grinning with the information that Olaf had gone. A big joke, John thought it.

The saw and the board dropped from the old man's hands on the frozen ground below. He would have fallen with them but for the platform railing.

The boy did not return. Efforts to trace him were vain. Bjornson worked on as usual, but at meals he scarcely ate, only looked dully out of the window, as if he half expected Olaf to step into the sunlight or shadow there. He ceased to " ask a blessing " at the table. In the evenings he sat smoking and silent, gazing into the crimson coals through the glazed doors of the stove.

In the spring news came of Olaf. He had died of pneumonia in a near-by State. He left no message to his father. Bjornson brought the body home for burial. He showed no emotion when his wife was killed. He was immune to grief.

Slowly he concentrated the residue of his affection on the ne'er-do-well John. After a respectable time he married " to give Yon a home."

This wife, Hansine, quarreled with John, and the son left. Bjornson sold his farm, bought a little place in town, and moved there. His wife came with him. She cooked and cared for his house and him in an effort to gain a crumb of love; but he denied her the least affection. He treated her as a drudge, and she clung to him the closer, like a dog that grows more devoted with the brutality of a master.

I shuddered at the spectacle of Bjornson on his death-bed that lovely day, as the wind brought the sound of birds and the smell of earth and flowers through the open window.

The boy of his dreams, the son of whom he had been so proud and of whom he had hoped so much, had died years ago, after trampling and breaking his heart. His wife was nothing in his eyes—a thing whose ministering meant only an attempt to intrigue him into leaving her his money. He was dying, and he had none left of his kin that he loved but John; and John was not there, had not come to him when he was dying!

All his ruined, hopeless life, all his failures, misfortunes, his wasted years and broken heart, looked at me out of the old man's restless, weary eyes.

"You didn't seen Yon?" he again anxiously inquired of me.

III

ONCE more I tried to outline in my mind an explanation of his son's dereliction, but I couldn't bring it to my lips.

No, I hadn't seen John lately.

"I suppose he is trasking his oats," Bjornson suggested.

Too emphatically and with a superabundance of detail, I hastened to assure him that this was what John was doing.

"Yes, rain might rot the oats if he left his stocks open to go avay to town," added the father.

He purposely ignored his knowledge and mine of the settled weather of late September. It had not rained recently and did not threaten to rain.

Yes, indeed, I concurred. Never can tell what the weather would do.

"Yon is careful about his horses," Bjornson continued. "He don't vant to run them around to town. He is kind by animals."

John was notoriously brutal to his horses; moreover, he had a motor-cycle to take him to dances and beer parties.

At that moment Hansine reappeared with a neighbor, Simon Peterson, who had stopped in to inquire after the invalid's health. She overheard the conversation about John.

"There is so much vork to do on a farm, it is hard to get avay at all," she announced.

Bjornson looked at her with anger and suspicion. He believed she was speaking in sarcasm. At first I thought so, too, for she and John always quarreled violently on every occasion, and I had never heard either speak a good word of the other; but after considering for a moment I saw that her words were sincere. Her love of her husband outweighed her hatred of his son.

Peterson sat down beside me on the trunk. He was a retired farmer who formerly lived in our community. He kept wriggling about in his ill-fitting store clothes. He was not used to "Sunday" garb on week-days, but he wore it now because of his family, to suit whose ambitious tastes he had moved to town.

He lit his long pipe. One thing he would not do, no matter how much his family might storm at him—he would not smoke cigars. Between long, audible puffs he now communicated:

"Yon I yust seen a little vile ago over by Bang's blacksmith shop. He come to town on his motor-cycle to see Buffalo Bill's show."

Bjornson's voice broke as he replied.

"My son," he said, "he can come to town to go over by Buffalo Bill, but he has not time to come over by his sick father, who is going to die. My only son vat I have left!"

And the proud old man turned away his face.

"The doctor, he sayed Bjornson von't live but a few days maybe," the woman whispered to Peterson. "Ask him if he don't vant the preacher he should come to consolation him. He alvays gets mad ven I sayed anything about Rev. Christenson. Maybe he vill listen better to you. I don't vant he should die avay by Yesus."

Peterson took his pipe from his mouth and leaned nearer the bed.

"Vant you Rev. Christenson to come over?"

The sick man shook his head.

"Let him come to say vat he vants at the funeral."

"If you don't vant Brother Christenson," persisted the other, "can I sent you my preacher, Rev. Swanson?"

Peterson, thanks to his Americanized family, belonged to the "English church," as members of Mrs. Bjornson's church called it.

Bjornson made a gesture of dissent. It was final.

He had been a very pious man. He used to like to argue about religion and exhort sinners to repent, warning them always of the terrible fate in store for those who died "vitoud God"; but the loss of Olaf turned him from the church. He was never seen in a pew again. It seemed a satiric trick of fate that this man should face death broken-hearted by grief and wo, and find no consolation himself in the spiritual comfort he had so highly recommended to others.

Peterson and Mrs. Bjornson left the room.

"Ven vill you be back from school?" Bjornson asked me, as I rose to follow the others.

"About Christmas," I replied.

Bjornson raised from his pillow. He pointed an emaciated hand toward the open window. Through it, a quarter of a mile away across a waste of weedy, vacant

ground on a green knoll, the marble slabs of a cemetery glistened a dancing white in the soft rays of the autumnal sun.

"I vill be out there ven you come back," he said.

What could I answer? What consolation could I offer him in the supreme bitterness of that hour? He was dying, and he knew that he was dying.

His face assumed a businesslike expression as he let his head fall back on the pillow, while his glance ranged from the picture of Olaf to me.

"You are going to school! If Olaf had lived and been to college he vould be ten times as smart as you, don't you t'ink?"

It was the first time I had heard him speak Olaf's name since he stood dry-eyed that stormy April morning when the body of his best-beloved was lowered into the grave.

"In the trunk, qvick," said Bjornson.

I raised the lid, took out a sheet of foolscap paper, and made ready my fountain pen at his further order.

"Write for me a vill," he commanded.

I hesitated. He looked at me with contemptuous questioning.

"You are in college, and you don't know how to write a vill? Olaf could did it. He vas a smart boy!"

"Tell me what you want, and I will write it," I answered, a little angered by his comparison of mine and Olaf's mentality.

"I vant you to say that all I got, vich is not much, I leave to my vife, because I didn't had no son," directed Bjornson. "If I don't leave no vill, Yon vould get two-thirds," he added in explanation.

I wrote it down as he instructed me, excepting the irrelevant allegation that he had no son. I was heartily glad that the poor old woman would be able to face the end of life with something to live on. The one-third of the property she would get by law would have been utterly insufficient.

He signed the document, scarcely taking time to look at it, for fear his wife might come in. I also signed as a witness. I then placed the paper in the trunk and went into the kitchen, where dinner was awaiting me.

Peterson stayed for a cup of coffee. He had recently finished his own dinner at home, but it would be a violation of every principle of the life of Hansine Bjornson to let anybody leave the house without sitting down to her table.

"I vish ve could get a preacher by Bjornson," observed Peterson.

The woman sighed in sympathy with his desire.

"Why do you want to weary Mr. Bjornson in his last hours?" I put in, pausing in my attack upon a piece of the white frosted cake I had kept in a nook of my mind since entering the house. "For my part I would rather get John to his bedside."

"Bjornson sent vord to Yon by Mr. Peterson and other peoples that he was very sick, but he never did come," Hansine said, as she passed the cake to Peterson. "And I don't t'ink he vill."

She looked fixedly at the shiny coffeepot. I could see her hard features convulsed as her face was reflected there. A fight was taking place, with this woman's soul as the battle-ground. What it was I could not fathom. I only sensed an agony of struggle.

She looked up at me, her face unsmiling, but bright with the triumph of some good impulse.

"Can't you go and bring Yon to the house? Go and get him in your buggy."

IV

I GAZED at her in wonder. I knew what it cost her to make the proposal to bring the man she hated to the man she loved.

"I'll do it," I agreed. "Peterson, you must help me. We will drive down and get him in your Ford. That will be quicker. Besides, my horses have all they can do to cover the twelve miles home."

"No," pronounced the pious Peterson. "If it is God's vill that Bjornson should die vitout his son by him, who are ve that ve should try to cause a miscarriage of divine yustice? If the Lord vould touch Yon's heart vit grace, and sent him here, it vould be different."

"But," I insisted, "why can't we act as instruments of Providence and bring him to his father?"

"Not our vill, but Thine, O Lord!" quoted Peterson.

He drank a second cup of coffee with loud noises and wiped some of the fluid from his mustache with the back of his hand. At home he was being trained to imbibe in a decorous manner, and now he was enjoying his liberties as a guest.

"You never rided in my Ford, did you?" he inquired of me. "She is a liddle devil. Come and sit in it by me."

"YEP, I OUGHT TO GO AND SEE HIM, AND I GUESS I VILL AFTER THE SHOW THIS AFTERNOON"

We left the house by the kitchen door, Mrs. Bjornson whispering to me:

"Tell Yon we have noodles for supper. He likes noodles. The only nice thing he ever said about me vas about my noodles."

Peterson and I walked over to the barn beside his house. He ran his car out into the alley, cranked it, and we were away.

"You are taking dis ride," announced my companion. "I go vere you vant me to go, and I vill take any of your friends vere you vant dem to go."

"To Buffalo Bill's show," I directed, as we reached Main Street.

He piloted the machine into the public road that led across the bridge over the river to where, on the other side, some dirty white tents loomed. Reaching the end of the wooden structure, he pulled to one side at my signal and stopped beside a long, low building with a painted sign in front announcing:

"City Limits Bar — farmer's first and last drink."

John always stopped at this place on his way to and from town. I expected to find him here, waiting for the Wild West show to open; but there was no motor-cycle against the wall, where his machine was wont to rest while its owner was within.

There was a series of explosions on the bridge. Peterson and I turned to gaze behind us. We heard a violent clanging as the loose planks rattled under the furious impact of a swiftly moving object. A smoking, thundering motor-cycle was coming. On it sat a young man with a grinning face that showed wide and red be-

tween the flapping rim of a greasy black hat and the yellow silk handkerchief about his neck. The rider was singing with loud and tuneless vim:

"Ven she make dem goo-goo eyes!"

It was John Bjornson. He had already slackened speed before he saw us. When he had mastered his machine, he whirled about and drew up beside us.

The wide grin enveloped his face still more as he shook hands. His mouth stood gaping, with tarnished and broken teeth slightly protruding. He had a short mustache of a lighter shade than his mouse-brown hair. He had his father's sea-green eyes and look of cunning; but there was nothing of the bitter, envious character of old Bjornson expressed in the countenance of his son.

Peterson broke into violent invective at the sight of that grinning face.

"Your father is dying, and you have not decency enough to go and see him. Vy, you ought to be hung by a tree!"

The thoughtless son seemed ashamed and grieved, but he couldn't lose that rollicking grin. Just so had he grinned at his father years ago when he said:

"Olaf, he runned avay."

"Yep, I ought to go and see him, and I guess I vill run out there after the show this afternoon."

"Your father may be dead by the time the show is over," I remonstrated.

"I don't vant to go!" exclaimed John, tears coming to his eyes, though his grin still persisted. "It alvays makes me so sad to see peoples sick, and I vill have to cry. I got such a tender heart, I not like to see anybody suffer."

"Hansine said there will be noodles for supper," I announced.

John smacked his lips.

"I like noodles almost so vell as beer," he remarked, standing irresolutely with his hands on the saddle of his machine. "I t'ink I go vit you," he said at last. "I vill go by the show to-night, instead. I vould like better to see it by electric lanterns, anyvay."

We started back toward old Bjornson's place after a brief visit inside the City Limits Bar, John driving ahead and talking all the time with his wide grin.

"Remember," said Peterson, "you are doing this. I just took you vere you vanted to go. Me, I do not try to run God's business."

Hansine met us at the door. At sight of John her eyes flashed venom, but only for a moment. They shook hands without warmth, though John did not cease to grin.

The rest of us paused at the door of the sick-room, but John begged us not to leave him. He wept loudly, and copious tears rolled out of his eyes as he bent over his father's bed.

Bjornson said nothing, only held fast to the hand of his sobbing son. Peace had come to him. The first smile was on his face that I had seen there since Olaf ran away.

"I knew all the time you would come and see your father ven he is sick, if you could. I t'inked you were busy trasking oats and could not get avay."

"Yes," I said, "he had an awful hard time to leave. He came to town to-day to see you, but he had to stop at Bang's and get his motor-cycle fixed, and that delayed him."

John nodded in emphatic corroboration.

"Vas you going to see Buffalo Bill?" inquired Bjornson suspiciously, recalling Peterson's remark.

"I thought maybe I go over to-night a little vile, before I go home, after I visit by you this afternoon."

The explanation evidently satisfied Bjornson, and he lay back on the white pillow with content in his eyes. Presently they closed, but the smile on his withered features remained.

That gaze of his, I doubted not, was fixed on the barren, sullen hills of a far-off land, where the waters pounded the frozen shores and the bitter winds whipped through the snow-hung branches of the trees that sheltered his childhood home.

His eyelids flickered, and the sea-green orbs sought mine.

"All out but him," he ordered, indicating me.

The others retired.

"In the trunk," whispered Bjornson.

I raised the cover, and took out the crude document I had drawn.

"Put it in the stove ven you get home," he ordered.

V

I PLACED the will in my pocket and tiptoed out of the room, for the sick man's eyes had closed again. Once more in fancy he was walking by the side of the angry seas in the northern land of his fathers.

Peterson was leaving the house as I stepped into the parlor.

"Vell, you got him here," said he, with stress on the "you."

"Yes, with the help of you and your car," I returned.

"No, no! I vas only taking you vere you vanted to go, as I sayed I vould," he insisted doggedly.

In the kitchen I found John eating noodles with noise and infinite relish.

"Where is Mrs. Bjornson?" I asked, for I wanted to bid her good-by and hurry home.

"She vent down cellar after some butter," John told me.

I descended to the cellar. The woman was sitting on a heaped-up bushel-basket of potatoes, crying with suppressed bitterness. She looked up at me and wailed brokenly:

"Bjornson can die happy with Yon by him, but me, I am dirt under his feet. He helt Yon's hand. He vould not holt mine!"

Jealousy of John, more than grief for her husband's approaching death, was rending her soul; and yet she had commissioned me to bring the son to his father!

"Damn him! I hate him, that dirty devil!" she cried in passion, forgetting all decencies of thought and speech.

She ceased sobbing and wiped her eyes with her apron. With a sigh she arose, picked up the butter-dish from a shelf, and began to climb the cellar steps. Closing the stair door, she faced me.

"I did wrong," she said. "It is good to know that Bjornson can go to his rest in peace. I vould rather have somebody else make him happy if I couldn't, even if it vas Yon."

Taking out the improvised will from my pocket, I explained its history and the disposition that Bjornson had told me to make of it.

"But I am not going to destroy it," I declared, handing it to her. "This property should go to you. You cannot exist with less than all of it in your old age, without friends or kin. Put it back in the trunk. That fool of a John is able to work for his living; and besides, he would spend his share of it in a month."

Hansine went into the house and returned with her spectacles. Slowly she put them on and read the will aloud, carefully spelling out each word. Then she removed the glasses, thrust them and the will into the pocket of her apron, and entered the kitchen, with me after her.

A fire was blazing in the cook-stove. Mrs. Bjornson drew forth the document and poked it into the flames. The paper crackled into blackness.

"Bjornson would vant me to do that," the woman said.

APRIL IN THE CITY

THE tenuous tips of all the trees
  Beside the street and square
Are reaching out their tender greens
  In the sweet April air.

From the park lawns on dewy dawns,
  Now low, now clear and strong,
The robins in a lyric arc
  Project their jets of song.

The subtile scents of violets
  Seep upward from the mold;
Upon the pavement showers the sun
  Its daffodilian gold.

Tall tower and spire and roof acquire
  A wealth of prismy gleams,
And you surprise in faded eyes
  The tints and glints of dreams.

Clinton Scollard

Joe Bush Understood Women

BY HERMAN HOWARD MATTESON

Illustrated by E. J. Dinsmore

FOR an instant, because she was half insane with worry and dread, Letty hated the world. She stood in the middle of the dark room of the igloo and stared down at the bales of fox-pelts. Would the women whom these beautiful skins were destined to adorn ever know, or care, at what cost of peril and privation they had been secured? That was the world that Letty just then hated—the warm, cheery outside world where folks wore pretty clothes, and went to parties, and could laugh. Her own present world, a bleak island of the far Aleutians, she had hated from the first.

Nevertheless, in the instant of her most acute soul-sickness, could she have known that her father was safe, she would have agreed to another two years of death in life amidst the whipping, vindictive winds and the rolling, dirty fog-banks. Hours before, her father had put out in a skin-covered bidarka, or two-man canoe. He should have returned long, long before. What had happened?

Letty's father, Boss Henry, had worked putteringly at many things in many parts of the Pacific Northwest. In his own words, he had followed camp cooking, hook-tending, bucking, falling timber, and fish-sliming in a salmon-cannery. He had fished for a while on Puget Sound. Then, when Letty's mother died, he took the girl and migrated to Alaska, where for a time he continued to fish and work intermittently for the cannery companies.

Some one told Boss Henry about the big money in fox-farming on the Aleutian Islands; so with Letty, whom he promised solemnly he would bring back to civilization as soon as he had made two thousand dollars, he left for Igchik Island, one of many hundreds of bleak rocks a thousand miles off the Alaskan coast.

Igchik was surrounded on all sides by other islands, some no more than a few hundred fathoms distant. Boss built an igloo of driftwood, and started trapping foxes on the near-by islands, liberating them on Igchik. Igchik afforded no end of cavernous sanctuary for the beasts; and as Boss Henry kept them well supplied with salmon and herring, which he caught in purse-seines and left strewn along the shores, where the kings and vixens might find them, the animals multiplied prodigiously.

During the first six months of existence on Igchik the Henrys had occasional callers—Aleuts who would put in in kaiak or bidarka, make pantomime appeal for whisky or tobacco, and paddle on when they received neither. Boss Henry had no ardent drink—Letty had seen to that; and of tobacco he had none to spare.

Serdze Shishmaref, a half-caste Russian, landed one day. Shishmaref was something of a dandy. He wore a bird-skin ruff on his parka, and upon his finger an immense hand-hammered copper ring set with a jagged green stone.

Shishmaref, who had a few words of English, told Letty that he had two wives, Kushini and Kosuk, both of whom could paddle a kaiak, hurl a seal spear with a throwing-stick, or skin a fox without nicking the pelt. Shishmaref said further that he had noble Russian blood in his veins and might have as many wives as he wished, but he contemplated taking no more at present, because seal-oil was scarce.

Letty laughed. A basket of salmon stood beside the door. Pointing to the basket, Letty asked Shishmaref if he would carry it for her to the beach, where she proposed to strew the fish among the rocks for the foxes to find.

Shishmaref gave a snarling laugh and shook his head. No; packing fish was woman's work.

With some difficulty Letty shouldered

the heavy basket, staggered down the slope, and began throwing the salmon to right and left among the rocks.

Shishmaref's little shoe-button eyes followed the girl. He shook his head, made his way to the beach, and shoved off his bidarka.

Two wives were enough while seal-oil was scarce. Anyhow, what good would be a wife who made so much fuss over shouldering a basket of fish? Yes, a third wife would be superfluous, a burden. She would be one too many—save for the redeeming factor of certain bales of fox-pelts that hung from the rafters of the Henry igloo. But those bales of skins, unfortunately, belonged to the white

LETTY HAD BEEN LURED AWAY FROM IGCHIK, AND AT A TIME WHEN THE MOUNTING SEA AND WIND WOULD INSURE HER ABSENCE FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS, AT LEAST

man, Henry; and therefore they were not a factor. Two wives were enough, anyway. The half-caste paddled on.

But a fortnight later Shishmaref did not have two wives. Kushini, the more industrious one, died of smallpox.

In the interim, Boss Henry had hung an added bale of fox-pelts from the rafters.

Again Shishmaref sat in the Henry igloo, his shining eyes roving from Letty to the bales of skins, to Boss Henry, and back to Letty. For an hour he sat thus. Then he rose, walked to the beach, and paddled away.

Another month, and Shishmaref came again. More bales of skins were hanging from the rafters. Boss Henry was prospering at fox-farming. The visitor's face bore an expression of mixed cupidity and jubilation. Letty, the girl, seemed distrait, sad, discouraged. A good deal more than two thousand dollars' worth of skins rested

in the bales; but Henry, possessed by the avarice that sometimes takes hold upon the improvident, had refused to go back to the mainland until he had another thousand, or maybe two thousand.

Shishmaref, staring at Letty, and from her to the bulging bales of skins, heaved a sigh and laid his pudgy, dirty hand upon the bosom of his fur parka.

Kosuk, his second wife, less useful than Kushini, had been drowned while spearing seals off the Island of the Four Mountains.

Boss Henry, upon his knees on the earth floor, was counting the skins in a bale. Letty was gazing into the gray sea through the narrow igloo window.

"Maybe now you marry me, eh?" Shishmaref was saying.

Letty turned and laughed derisively. Boss Henry kept on counting fox-pelts. Serdze Shishmaref arose, tightened the string belt of his parka, made to the shore, and paddled away.

Letty, her face grown a little pale, waited until her father had finished counting the pelts and had baled them up.

"One more bale of skins, dad!" she said firmly. "Just one more bale—then I am going, even if I have to paddle alone to Unimak!"

Henry's face grew sullen, but he agreed. One more bale of skins, and then they would go to Unalaska and catch a steamer south-bound. But he was coming back. This was too good a thing to pass up.

He had worked out a scheme for the preservation of the foxes during his absence. At the upper end of Igchik was a shallow that overflowed at high tide. He had salvaged a piece of fish-trap webbing from a floating pile, and had made a dam at the outer end of the shallow. Through this fish could enter the pool, but could not find their way back to the sea. Every day he was stocking the pool with his surplusage of seined live salmon. The foxes, cunning creatures, would soon learn — in fact had already learned — to prowl the borders of the pool at low tide and scratch the floundering fish out upon the rocks. Of course, during his absence, the Aleuts would poach upon his foxes; but the inherent native laziness was a guarantee that they would do comparatively little harm.

Day after day, with one excuse or another, Boss Henry delayed departure. He had need of more live fish to place in the pool. He had learned from Iser Kyner, an Aleut, of a den of foxes on Smuginov Island. He would trap just a few more vixens on Smuginov to turn loose on Igchik, and brail in another barrel or two of live fish for the pool. Then they would go.

"This is the last, dad! I mean it. The storm season is on, and pretty soon there'll be no more steamers south from Unalaska."

Boss Henry agreed. He brought in and liberated half a dozen vixens; then started forth for a last brailing of the live fish. This should have taken him no more than a couple of hours; but he had been gone six hours. What had happened?

II

LETTY paced the narrow floor, pausing before the window now and then to stare into the waste of gray sea and somber sky.

Striving to throw off the dread apprehension that came over her, the girl tried to divert her mind by completing preparations for their departure. The fox-pelts had all been baled and made ready. The few cooking-utensils and non-perishable supplies were to be left in the igloo. Her own pitiful belongings she would pack in a canvas ditty-bag. When they reached Unalaska she would buy a decent suit-case, or bag of some sort.

Standing before the rude, home-made dresser, she lifted lovingly one remindful trinket after the other, and laid it back upon the dresser, but made no move to thrust any of them into the ditty-bag. There were a few snap-shot photos, a dance program, some bits of lace, and a little vanity case.

But her father—why did he not come? Many times in childish petulance and rebellion she had thought that she had hated him; had dwelt upon the complacence with which, she imagined, she would have received news of his death.

Her father! If she could only have known that he was safe, she would readily have agreed to another year, or even two years, in the cold Aleutian fog.

There sounded a rattling at the door of the igloo. Dropping the vanity case back upon the dresser top, she ran to the door. Outside it stood Iser Kyner, a flat-faced Aleut who had been to Igchik several times, once or twice in company with Serdze Shishmaref.

Iser Kyner, as always, was grinning vacuously.

"Your father, he sick and bad hurt,"

said Kyner, stabbing a thick thumb over his right shoulder."

"Hurt! Badly! Where is he?"

Letty seized the fur edging of Kyner's parka as he made as if to walk away.

"He there, that island. No can paddle bidarka. I go by, and Boss he call and say it to me he sick and bad hurt. My canoe is kaiak. Just one mans can ride in kaiak. So I come on here."

Too well did Letty know Kyner to waste time upbraiding him for his stupidity and brutish indifference; to demand why he had not put in and paddled her father to Igchik in his own stanch two-man bidarka.

One consideration alone possessed the girl—her father. Besides the sizable and seaworthy bidarka in which he had set forth, Henry was the owner of a kaiak; but it was an indifferent craft, with a covering of walrus hide that hung precariously upon the frame of wood and bone. The tide was then at the turn, and, as always, the wind was veering, whipping in strongly from the eastward. The kaiak was too shaky a boat in which to assay a journey in that rising sea.

Letty had followed Iser Kyner to the beach. Repeating again that her father was "sick and bad hurt," the Aleut pointed to the cranky old kaiak.

Letty shook her head.

"Let me take your kaiak, Kyner?" she pleaded. "You wait here for me. I'll give you 'taka nip' when I come back."

"Taka nip" is a bit of tobacco. Kyner's eyes shone greedily.

"All right!" he agreed.

Swiftly Letty ran back to the igloo, donned her parka, and returned to the beach. Kyner helped her into the manhole of his canoe, tied the rawhide strings of the apron about her waist, and shoved the boat off. Letty seized the paddle, and drove the kaiak into the midst of the channel, heading it toward the tumble of rocks a mile distant where Kyner had said her father was marooned.

Momentarily wind and tide grew in strength; but both were in her favor. In the midst of a swirl of spume and spray she drove Kyner's kaiak into a tiny bay of the island and sprang ashore.

Calling her father's name, she ran wildly up the slope. Still calling, she ran along the beach, crossed the island, and returned by the opposite shore.

Iser Kyner had lied to her. Her father was not on the rock island. This had been a cunning ruse to get her away from Igchik!

Wind and tide were mounting apace, and for another two hours would still increase, or at least hold. Until the tide and wind shifted, an attempt to regain Igchik would prove perilous indeed. She was marooned, for the time being, on the rocky island!

Back and forth along the beach she paced nervously, the wind whipping her parka about her, driving the salt spray savagely into her face.

III

THE coast-guard cutter Wolf had been on continuous duty in Alaskan waters for two years. For months at a stretch it watched the seal-poachers off the Pribilofs; then it put into Icy Straits to the relief of a floe-locked whaler, steamed to the Diomedes, or across to Siberia, where the Bolsheviki threatened an American salmon-cannery. During all that time the crew had not seen a white woman.

The nerves of men long sequestered from civilization became raw. Murder has been done on lonely Alaskan trails because one partner wanted his bacon crisp, the other not so crisp.

Joe Bush had enlisted in the coast-guard at Seattle. He was sent north on a liner, joined the Wolf at Unalaska, and forthwith every old man of the crew—especially Badeye, the boatswain—hated Joe because Joe began at once to tell about the bang-up parties he had been to. In particular he described the costume worn by Lilly Bell at the longshoremen's dance. With vast good humor, he stood up in the between-bunk space in the glory-hole, seized Lan Gifford, one of the crew, in his long arms, and proceeded to demonstrate the nice intricacies of the raspberry wiggle.

Joe Bush was an enormous young fellow with thick wrists, a prominent Adam's apple, and a large, bumpy nose. The latter member, as if not already sufficiently conspicuous, was set off, as if in parenthesis, by two deep wrinkles. That eye was jaundiced indeed that could regard Joe Bush as being in the least effeminate.

Nevertheless, effeminacy was the identical quality that Badeye, the boatswain, believed to be paramount in the entity of Joe Bush. The probationship of a swab, or novice, aboard a coast-guard vessel is never the gentlest, and the "riding" administered to Joe during the first month of his

service was something atrocious. Joe found tacks in his bunk, soap in his lobscouse, and soft tar in his cap.

THE SIGHT STAMPEDED LETTY'S CAUTION. SHE TORE OPEN THE DOOR AND CONFRONTED THE THIEVES

These were but playful preliminaries to the real ordeal that was to come, which is known in the service as "learning a swab his Latin." Every man in the coast-guard knows two classical words, these being the motto of the service—"*semper paratus*," meaning "ever ready."

Dealing with situations remote, the officers and men of the coast-guard are frequently judge, jury, and executioners. Badeye had gained his sobriquet when he had been sent ashore alone, near the Kuskokwim, to bring in a native who had gone mad on bitters and was running amok with a seal spear. The boatswain lost an eye, but gained his man, promotion, and an honorable mention.

A dozen situations arose in line of duty where Joe Bush might have had his crucial tryout; but always Badeye maneuvered for delay. The situation was not critical enough, lacked the elements for a real test. In the mean time, by every slur and innuendo, life was made miserable for Joe.

" Better get out your curling-kids, Joe," said Badeye one day, " and do your hair up every night. I feel in my bones they's a tryout coming up!"

Every man of the ship watched for and even manufactured opportunities to torment Joe Bush, the ladies' man. Badeye studied the victim night and day, seeking his points of vulnerability.

" No use trying a man out in a game he's strong in," quoth Badeye sapiently to Lan Gifford. " Try him out where he's weak. That 'll learn him his Latin!"

Badeye, watching Joe's every move during the month that the guard cruised along the coast from Port Mollar to Chichagof and return, discovered the big fellow's weak spot. Joe Bush, though he had chosen to follow it, had a deadly fear of the sea. Sent ashore in a work boat, when a swell would give the craft a list Joe's face would pale, and he would lay hold of the gunwales with a grip like that of a ship's clamp. Joe Bush had a mortal terror of a rough sea.

Badeye, laying his finger alongside his nose with a " fee-fi-fo-fum " expression, resolved to wait a little longer. There would be opportunities abundant, and shortly, for the teaching of Latin to a swab. The Wolf would double back along the coast, traverse Unimak Pass, and cruise the length of the Aleutians. Weather! Who desires to see the elements go completely mad, let him visit the far Aleutians in the early winter.

Alternately bucking the turbulent seas that set against the tide with the ebb, and riding the wave-crests in a smother of flying spray, on the flood, the Wolf made along the curving horn of interminable islands. The captain, an oilcloth-covered note-book in his hand, stood peering over the top of the canvas wall that had been stretched about the bridge. Momentarily the sea was mounting. The wind, sounding a hundred discordant notes upon the funnels and ventilators, and thrumming at the shrouds, shrieked its mad triumph.

" White man on that island," said the captain to Badeye, as he pointed to starboard. " A white fur-farmer and his girl have been there over two years now, according to the word given me at Unalaska. Ought to stand in and see how they are making it. Not in this weather, though. Too shoal water for my ship. Bad reefs thereabouts."

Badeye stepped to the edge of the bridge and looked over the top of the canvas.

" Why, this hain't so bad, captain," he said. " Leave me pick a man, and I'll make it ashore easy in the kicker."

The captain turned to regard Badeye. A moment the old skipper studied his boatswain curiously. Really, in line of duty, a report should be made on the white man fur-farmer. The captain's eyes twinkled admiringly.

" All right, Badeye—I'll heave to. If you're nimble, you can get away. Step ashore and see how the man Henry is making out. I'll pick you up to-morrow morning in the lee of Rat Island."

Badeye fairly fell down the ladder, and went clattering down the companionway.

" Hey, Joe Bush!" he howled. " Where's Joe Bush?"

Joe was seated in plain sight on the bench.

" Oh, here's Joe Bush!" exclaimed Badeye in mock surprise. " Well, Joe, put on them pants with the lace rove to the bunt, and come on. I and you are going ashore on Igchik in the kicker!"

Joe Bush took a look through the port light at the raging sea, and turned pale. He rose unsteadily to his feet.

" All—all right," he stammered.

The bell jangled sharply in the engine-room. The Wolf came about on half speed, and lay rolling in the trough.

The kicker, a launch half decked over with bow stanchions and canvas to protect the gas-engine, was shoved free of the davits. Four men gave way at the falls and the launch was lowered away. The fall-hooks were knocked free, and two men with boat-hooks held the kicker at stem and stern.

" Come on, Joe Bush!"

Badeye climbed to the rail of the Wolf, watched his chance, and dropped upon a thwart of the kicker just as it was sinking on a falling sea.

Joe, trembling in every limb, his face deathly pale, climbed unsteadily to the rail. He made two or three false starts. Then, goaded by Badeye's derisive abuse, he jumped at the wrong time, struck a thwart, and tumbled in a heap in the bottom of the kicker.

But Badeye had started up the engine. The men shoved the launch away from the roll of the larger craft, and it was off—plunging, rocking, now buried, now mounting gamely up a big wave.

"What I mean," observed Lan Gifford, "is that anyway the swab is game as a stinger-fish. That's what I mean!"

IV

A WILD sort of fury began to lay hold of Letty as she commenced to understand the sinister aspects of the situation. The Aleuts would hardly have the nerve actually to murder her father. Very probably he was marooned on some island, his bidarka set adrift. She, in her turn, had been cunningly lured away from Igchik, and at a time when the mounting sea and wind would insure her absence for a couple of hours, at least. Serdze Shishmaref would steal the precious bales of fox-pelts, and neither she nor her father would be in a position to bring convincing evidence against him.

The theft of the fox-skins would mean another year—two years—blurred out of her life by the cold hand of the fog devil. Letty had begun to comprehend the barbarous theology of the bitter North.

She stood staring down at the lapping waves rolling the dead clam-shells along the beach. Still the wind was rising, and the seas flung themselves with increasing menace upon the rocks.

The mounting gale brought one compensating feature. So violent had the wind become that occasionally it would lift the dirty curtain of fog clear of the pass. Then, for an instant, she could see the whole length of the channel and the rugged outline of Igchik, which seemed maddeningly near.

She ran down the shore and clambered to the top of a boulder that lay at the jutting end of the island. Again the fog lifted. A power-boat, with snow-white canvas top, was making into the bay near her father's igloo. A boat from the coast-guard! She had seen the identical craft at Unalaska more than two years before.

The coast-guard!

But her shrill, exultant scream died away to nothingness as she ran swiftly back to where she had beached the kaiak. That lashing sea and roaring wind! Could a kaiak, could any open craft, live in it for an instant? And if it lived, could her frail strength avail against those smashing waves?

Again the lifting fog. The power-boat, rolling and pitching, had made into the tiny bay. The launch had edged cautiously up to a sheer rock. She could discern a man flinging out the anchor. A sailor balanced himself upon the bow of the launch. Using the boat-hook as a vaulting-pole, he had swung himself to the rock, had tossed the boat-hook back to a second man.

Then the fog lowered.

She must, simply must, get back to Igchik—and at once, before the coast-guard men concluded their errand, regained their launch, and went on.

Letty knew the functions of the coast-guard—to put in at islands here and there, to have a look about, and, if everything was all right, to go on.

She laid her blue hands to the gunwale of the kaiak and thrust it into the water; but a truculent sea flung it back upon the beach. Crying, whimpering, she stamped her feet, struck her hands together, shrieked wildly against the wind for the coast-guard men to wait, wait!

Again from the boulder top she awaited the lifting of the fog. The guard launch was still in the bay. Again she was staring at an impenetrable gray wall, but in the instant granted her she had studied the mile of space that lay between her rocky island and Igchik.

It could be done! There was a chance! If she could launch the kaiak and get across the boiling narrows into the lee of Igchik, she might possibly make a landing.

Back she ran to the skin boat, and pushed it into the water; but again and again the craft was flung back by the seas.

Up shore a distance, a promontory of rocks formed a tiny bay. Its shelter was meager, but the waters there were a trifle less turbulent. Now dragging the skin boat along the sands, now lifting it lest its frail walrus-hide cover should suffer a tear, she got the kaiak to the little bay, and finally succeeded in launching it. The apron fastened tightly about her waist, she headed the thing out into the seas, and paddled as she had never paddled before toward the sheltering lee of Igchik.

A score of times, but for the skin apron about her body that fastened to the brim of the tiny cockpit in which she sat, she would have swamped. Terrifically the thundering seas pounded the frail craft. Her gravest danger was that the buffeting of the waves might rack loose the none too secure framework of thong-fastened wood and whalebone.

As she came into the comparative quiet

of the lee of Igchik, she paused to relieve the numbness of her hands by opening and closing them.

Again on! In order to double a treacherous point of rock, she was forced to take to the open again. The kaiak mounted the crest of a billow. There came a whisk of wind that split the fog. The white canvas top of the power-launch was putting out of the bay and heading eastward, away from her.

Frantically she waved her paddle and screamed until her voice failed her; but she was crying futilely against the wind. The dead drab of the kaiak, her own colorless garb of skins, the fact that the kaiak rode so low in the water, made of her and her boat an inconspicuous mark. Besides, the rift in the fog-bank closed again almost immediately.

Seizing the paddle, she drove the kaiak on with all her strength. Disregarding now the perils of the open, she took the shortest course for the bay before the igloo; and finally she won into it.

Beaching the kaiak, she scrambled up the bank and ran swiftly to the lower end of the island. Borne to her upon the wind she could hear the hoarse exhaust of the power-boat. No use calling any more! The coast-guard launch was too far distant. Besides, she sensed that she had best exercise caution, do nothing to betray to Iser Kyner the fact that she had returned; for she knew that it had been no part of the Aleut's calculations that she would make back to Igchik until the wind

SHISHMAREF LAY WHERE HE HAD FALLEN. BENDING OVER HIM WAS A HUGE FELLOW CLASPING A NAVY REVOLVER

and tide had turned—which would not happen for another hour.

She crept to the igloo and placed her ear to the wall. Slowly she lifted her eyes to a level with the narrow window.

V

ISER KYNER, upon his hands and knees, was just completing the task of rebaling the fox-pelts into smaller bundles. Serdze Shishmaref sat upon a stool, smoking a pipe belonging to her father, and filled with her father's tobacco.

The sight stampeded her caution. She tore open the door and confronted the thieves. Iser Kyner began to grin unconvincingly, and to try to explain. Serdze Shishmaref opened and closed his thick lips, and his little shoe-button eyes grew sinister. He spoke a few words in Aleutian to Iser Kyner. The latter first expostulated, then agreed.

"Too bad!" said the half-breed. "Too bad! White girl, she come back too soon. Little more time and we would be far away. Now, white girl she knows too much. She goes along too!"

Letty assayed a laugh, but it rattled dismally in her throat.

"Where is my father?" she demanded.

Shishmaref stabbed his thumb carelessly over his shoulder toward the south.

"He there, on island. He go to fish. He pull the net in a little bay. I shove his bidarka off. He stay there quite a while."

Letty stepped to the door leading into her room. On top of the rude dresser still lay, in disarray, her belongings—the bits of lace, the dance programs, her little vanity case and powder-puff.

"I'll give you half the skins, Shishmaref," she said, turning to the half-breed, her voice unsteady.

He shook his head stubbornly.

"All skins twice as much as half," he said. "I take 'em all. I take you, too. White girl know too much!"

"Now see here, Shishmaref! If you take a single pelt, or lay that dirty hand of yours on me—maybe you don't know that I know the coast-guard is in. Well, I do!"

Shishmaref gave his bullet head a toss.

"Oh, no! Coast-guard go away. Two gold-braid mans come. I say it your father bad sick, and you take him in bidarka long time ago—start to Unalaska, where white doctor is. Coast-guard go away. Gold-braid mans say they catch up with their ship, then go on fast to help you when maybe storm get bad." Shishmaref pointed his right hand to the east, his left to the west. "Coast-guard go there—we go here!"

Iser Kyner shouldered a heavy bundle of skins and made out of the door toward the beach.

For some moments Letty stood regarding the half-breed. He returned her gaze stolidly. Kyner entered, shouldered a second bundle of skins, and made for the beach. A third time he returned, this time gathering up all the remaining pelts.

Shishmaref rose.

"We go now," he said to Letty. "Anything you want take along, get it now!"

The half-breed stepped to the door of her room and waved his pudgy hand at the rude dresser, at clothing hanging from nails on the wall.

"You come pick up things now," he said. "We ready to go."

He turned and beckoned impatiently to her; but she darted past him, flung open the door, and ran out screaming. Slipping, falling, scrambling to her feet, she made for the wildest part of the island, where the gray boulders lay in scattered piles.

Shishmaref came waddling after her. Within a nest of rock, her frantic heart beating wildly, she made her stand.

The half-breed came cautiously over the rocks. Letty seized a bit of stone and hurled it at him with frantic inaccuracy. From a safe distance he regarded her with amusement, laughing as the missiles went wild or fell short.

After a time there were no more stones about that she could lift. Shishmaref advanced. Like a fury, scratching, clawing, she flung herself upon him; but he laid hold of her wrists with one thick hand.

At the feel of her soft flesh in his grasp, the brute of him took ascendency. He cast his arms about her and crushed her body to his. Gathering her up, he started to carry her to the beach.

Suddenly, as her captor bore her past a boulder and started to descend to the graveled beach, Letty felt herself tumble from the half-breed's relaxing grasp into a huddled heap upon the earth.

Shishmaref lay where he had fallen. Bending over him was a huge fellow clasping in his hand the navy revolver with which he had whacked the half-breed over the head.

"I'm Joe Bush," said the big one. "You hain't got any call to be afraid. No! You see," added Joe, reaching a vast hand to help Letty to her feet, "I knew them Indians was lying. They said you'd gone to take your father in a canoe to see a young doctor. Badeye he orders me to come on. I argued with Badeye. I says he's wrong; but Badeye is boss. I and Badeye has a fight, and we put back. I knew they'd lied! If you went to see a young doctor, with a wind blowing that would make any girl's nose red, why, I knew you'd 'a' took your powder-puff. There, there! You hain't any call to cry. Your dad is all right. He give us a hail as we come back, from that island over there. Now, now, you hain't any call to cry. There, there!"

The Revival of the Highroad

THE MODERN MOTOR-TRUCK IS OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION, PARTLY AS A COMPETITOR OF THE RAILROADS, BUT CHIEFLY IN ALLIANCE WITH THEM

By Alexander Johnston

Editor of "Motor"

WE of the United States learned many things during the world war, but nothing was impressed on us more strongly than certain facts in regard to our transportation system, the place it holds in our national life, and its vital needs for the future.

Despite the sneers and gibes of captious critics, our railroads had always been the best in the world, carrying more freight at a cheaper rate than those of any other country. They had always been adequate to our needs, with something to spare.

Then the exigencies of war compelled us to ask the railways to do more than they could, and straightway the lesson began. We made our formal entry into the fighting ranks of civilization in the spring of 1917, and at once began to make enormous preparations for manufacturing war munitions of all kinds on an unprecedented scale. By the fall of that year we were achieving results, and these grew rapidly with the passing months. The railways had to transport practically all this material from its point of origin to the seaboard for embarkation. This was in addition to carrying their regular burdens, the food and other necessities for the entire country.

Month by month the burden of the railways grew heavier, the strain upon their facilities more severe. At the same time the industries that had always supplied them with replacement equipment were called upon more and more to give up their regular work and devote their attention to the production of war materials. Thus the railways were catching it at both ends. They were compelled to carry more freight than ever before, but were unable to obtain additional equipment, or even to get replacements for locomotives and rolling stock that had gone to pieces under the unusually heavy traffic.

In these circumstances the government officials, seeking desperately for some means of helping the railways to carry the burden, found a new transportation means —the motor-truck. Of course the motor-truck was not a new vehicle. It had already proved its worth as an urban carrier, and to a small extent in cross-country hauling; but when the call came during the trying days of the war, it proved that it had possibilities far beyond the hopes of its most earnest advocates.

It was the military authorities who made the first exhaustive test of the motor-truck as a "big time" freight-carrier. As soon as the pressure on the railways had become serious, army officials began utilizing the motor-trucks built for service abroad as

freight-carriers in the fighting area. Thousands of big two-ton trucks had been built in the Middle West. As soon as a convoy of these was ready for shipment to Europe, they were sent to some manufacturing-plant producing war munitions. Here they were loaded to capacity and started for the seaboard. When they reached some Atlantic port, their loads were transferred to waiting steamers, and the trucks themselves were also taken aboard and transported to the war zone.

The entire success of this undertaking demonstrated that the motor-truck can serve as an effective transportation medium, not only for urban work, but in comparatively long-distance hauling. Railway men have fully recognized this fact, and Daniel Willard, president of the Baltimore and Ohio, was one of the first to hail the truck as a future ally of the railway, supplementing the work of the latter in final distribution and in the short-haul field.

THE ROAD TRAINS OF THE FUTURE

It would be idle, however, to believe that the motor-truck as now constructed and operated is the ideal or ultimate freight-carrier, which will round out our transportation system by cooperation with the railways. It is wholly likely that the highway freight-carrier of the future will be a motor-powered vehicle, pulling a train of trailers. In other words, railway practise will be found far more efficient than the present individual unit operating under its own power.

To reverse the analogy, imagine the railway carrying freight in a train consisting of the engine and tender, with no cars behind. The motor-truck of to-day is not economical for freight-hauling on a wholesale basis, though under certain conditions the saving in time and handling makes it more economical than the railway; but when the truck—or rather when motor power—comes fully into its place in our transportation system, the multiple-unit carrier will undoubtedly be adopted as the best method of operation.

It is probable that the motor freight-hauler of the future will consist of a vehicle embodying characteristics of both the truck and the tractor. It will have greater power than the truck of to-day, and greater speed and general flexibility than the tractor. Behind this power unit will follow a train of freight-cars or trailers, somewhat resembling those in use on our railways, but presumably smaller and certainly lighter. There will no doubt be different types of cars for different sorts of service.

It is not difficult to present in concrete form the reasons why this transportation revolution is certain to come sooner or later, placing motor-transport in the position of first lieutenant to the railways, supplementing their service and performing a task that the railed carrier can never hope to assume.

Of course this country of ours, particularly the Eastern section, is fairly grid-ironed with railways. These stretch out in all directions, and yet there are great areas that they do not and cannot reach. If two parallel lines are separated by a stretch of say thirty miles, the sections within a five-mile limit of the tracks have good service, but the larger area beyond this limit is practically without direct transportation. Its business needs, very probably, would not justify the enormous expense of building other railways to serve it, and yet it may be capable of fine development if only it can get transportation facilities.

This is where the motor-vehicle is going to come in, supplementing the work of the railway, and opening up to profitable cultivation great areas of land that can never hope for direct and convenient rail connection. Motor freight-trains will collect produce of all kinds from these unserved areas and bring it to the nearest rail center, whence it will be forwarded by rail to its distant destination.

In the short-haul field, the motor freight-carrier will practically assume the entire burden of transportation. Railway men are hoping for this, so that their lines may be left free to cope with long-distance hauling, which is steadily increasing in volume. These two fields are undoubtedly the future sphere of the motor freight-carrier.

THE EQUIPMENT OF THE ROAD TRAIN

It would be impossible to write of the future of motor freight-hauling without calling attention to the fact that the possibilities of this transportation medium are largely due to the development of the giant pneumatic tire. The pneumatic tire places the highway vehicle on somewhat the same plane as the railway-train, in that it reduces the tremendous vibration that is present in the use of solid tires. Vibration is the great enemy of efficiency and longevity in motor-vehicles.

The pneumatic tire for motor-trucks is still in its infancy. The larger sizes have been available only within the past few years, yet already they are exerting a large influence on hauling problems. The next few years are likely to see giant pneumatics perfected to a point where they will compare in general efficiency with the steel rails of the traditional freight-carrier.

So there is little question that when the railways have transferred the appointed classes of haulage to motor-vehicles, these latter will follow railway practise in preferring multiple units, pulled by a motored vehicle, to the wasteful present method of carrying goods in a number of vehicles each propelled by its own power-plant.

It is not unlikely that there will be some provision for moving units of the highway freight-train under their own power. This may take the form of a small battery, deriving power from the motored vehicle which pulls the train. In this way, when a highway freight-train enters some small town where there is a shipment to be delivered, the car containing the goods will be uncoupled and dropped off. This vehicle will then be driven under its own power to the concern to which it is consigned. After it is unloaded, it will be taken back to the main street and parked in the proper place, to be picked up by the first train back to its place of origin.

Inevitably many refinements will develop in the methods of handling the highway freight-trains of the future. Those traversing a given route will be so made up that cars consigned to the various villages and towns will be at the rear of the train upon its arrival at their destination, so that the units will simply be dropped off in order. Less than car-load lots may be handled by dropping off the rear car and permitting it to wait for the next train to pick it up again and carry it to the next town.

It is entirely possible, of course, that a power medium superior to the present internal combustion engine may be found for the motive unit of the highway freight-train. Steam has many obvious advantages for this type of commercial hauling. A modern flash boiler would make an admirable power-plant for a highway freight-train, where speeds of ten or twelve miles would be sufficient. However, this is a mere detail in the general scheme of transportation that we are outlining.

Unquestionably the success of the highway freight-train will be governed by the sort of maintenance that it receives. This will have to be of the same type that the railway-train of to-day receives. The railway engine, after a run of a few hundred miles—every day, in fact, regardless of its mileage—goes into the roundhouse and receives a careful overhauling. So with the railway freight-train; at the end of every day's run the powered unit will go into the repair-shop and undergo a minute inspection. Such care as it needs—principally lubrication—will be given on the spot. There will be no chance for small imperfections to grow into breakdowns.

It is obvious that the highway freight-train will be essentially the means of moving heavy merchandise and ordinary shipments not subject to any particular limits of time. It will undoubtedly be necessary to supplement this comparatively slow freight-hauling by express service of various sorts. We may have highway freight-trains capable of much greater speed than the ordinary carrier, and this is where the wonderful flexibility of the motor-vehicle proves its eternal value. It will be easy enough to have light trains that will make thirty or forty miles per hour; or individual trucks could be assigned to handle special shipments, just as they do to-day. The essential matter is that motor freight-haulage will have to be placed on the same systematic and efficient basis as railway hauling, instead of being carried out as a function of the individual company, as it is at the present time.

While there is no question with regard to the future of the pneumatic tire in motor-truck transportation, it is by no means certain just what form this essential equipment will take. Practically all the big tire companies who put out truck-size pneumatics are experimenting and collecting data that will tend to show just what form of tire will render the best service.

One company, in particular, is conducting an exhaustive series of experiments with multiple wheel equipment. Instead of the customary four wheels, six are used, there being two sets of wheels in the rear, mounted on separate axles. In fact, the rear layout bears a considerable resemblance to the wheel truck of the railway-car. In this way it is possible to use pneumatics of reasonable size, and yet by the distribution of weight to obtain satisfactory tire economy.

Some students of tire developments be-

lieve that eventually we shall have trucks with as many as twelve wheels, six forward and six aft, arranged in six-wheel units. This method of multiplying wheels and cutting down the individual tire sizes has many advantages; and while it is too early to speak definitely, the idea has a good chance of general adoption.

While there must be a considerable development of the present types of motor-trucks before we can hope for the transportation revolution that we have somewhat sketchily outlined, there is another factor of equal importance in the situation, and that is the roads.

THE BIG PROBLEM OF ROAD-BUILDING

During the past ten years the highway system of the United States has developed almost past belief, but the enormous size of this far-flung country of ours leaves a huge task still to be accomplished. In spite of all the building that has been put behind us in the last decade, our national highway system is still exceedingly "patchy." In some sections of the country there are consecutive routes many hundreds of miles in length, with a road surface that is generally good; but even on the best of these there are stretches of bad road. On the truck roads of the future there will be no bad stretches, any more than there would be sections of a railway without any rails. There remains, then, the task of filling in our highway system so that it shall be complete and comprehensive, with no intervals of poor surface to break up the flow of long-distance traffic.

In addition to completing what has already been partially done, there is an enormous amount of new building to be carried out. Huge regions of the country are still practically without highways worthy of the name. Certainly the roads of the Middle West, and those of the Far West on this side of the Rocky Mountains, are not yet in such condition that they could be used for extensive freight traffic. Colorado, indeed, has built a wonderful system of mountain roads; she is ahead of her neighbors. The South has made commendable strides in road-building, but there are few long-distance routes in that section which could hope to carry heavy freight traffic.

Many parts of the country need highways badly and are totally unable to stand the expense of building them. In the sparsely settled regions of the West, the local communities will never be able to stand the taxation that would be necessary to gridiron that land of magnificent distances with good roads. Even the States are unable to shoulder the cost of bridging their vast empty spaces. The only solution of the problem is Federal construction of a Federally maintained highway system. This state of things we are gradually approaching, Federal aid being already an accomplished fact.

The past year or so has brought out unmistakably the fact that not only have we an insufficient mileage of good roads, but there must also be a great change in the form of our highways. The increasing motor-truck traffic of recent months has put our roads to a test which they have not been able to meet with complete success. Their failure was partly caused by the use of materials adequate to carry the traffic of pre-war times, but not up to the steady pounding of heavily laden trucks. In addition to this it has become evident, or at any rate is becoming evident, that our inter-city highways, the arteries of traffic which carry an increasing volume of freight between our great centers of population, are not laid out on the proper lines to promote the efficiency and economy of communication which must be a feature of future motor-truck transportation.

A NEW HIGHWAY SYSTEM NEEDED

There is an old verse which explains in considerable detail just how a sick calf laid out the street system of one of our older cities. Exaggeration though this may be, it points a moral with regard to our cross-country highways. When our fathers plotted the crude outline of our existing system of roads, they did so piecemeal and with a vision not extending far beyond the ends of their noses. Theirs was the stay-at-home age, and their only interest lay in an easy way to reach the next town. A road from West Clinton to Wayville Center was about all the inhabitants of those cultured communities cared for; and so the road was built, or, perhaps, pounded down across the fields.

Very fine for the slow-moving, horse-drawn age, interested only in a radius of some dozen miles or so from its own fireside; but times have changed since that day, and now two hundred miles is little more than an average day's highway travel. We of to-day are interested not in the small

city ten miles away, but in the metropolis fifty or a hundred miles distant. As a result, however, of our fathers' patchwork planning of highways, routes connecting the bigger centers of population wander hither and yon, backward and forward, reaching their destination at such an expenditure of mileage as would make an efficiency expert grind his teeth in rage.

That is one of the first things we have got to alter before we can hope to usher in the new era of highway freight-transportation. The great centers of population must be connected by bee-line highways, capable of carrying the utmost burden of heavy motor-traffic that future developments can possibly impose upon them. So far as concerns the main arteries, the roads connecting our great centers of population, there is no reason why we cannot eventually have a highway system exactly as efficient as the railway system of to-day. In fact, it can be a more direct system, because the highway engineer does not have to cut his grades so fine.

THE HIGHROADS OF THE FUTURE

We may picture the highway system of to-morrow as having a backbone of bee-line roads, thirty or perhaps forty feet wide, with an absolutely smooth surface, and lighted from end to end, so that travel will be possible during every hour of the day, week, month, and year. In all probability there will be no grade crossings on these roads, intersecting roads being carried below the main artery, or lifted over it by means of bridges, exactly as is done on the best railways of to-day. Approaches will be provided, so that traffic may obtain entrance to the main highway from side roads.

These roads of the future may be divided into speed zones, swiftly moving vehicles keeping toward the center of the right of way, though this development would only come with intensive traffic. Unquestionably they will be kept clear of snow in winter, for the very economic structure of the nation will be built upon their regular and uninterrupted service.

Finally, we must make up our minds to great changes in the present methods of surfacing our highways. The growing motor-truck traffic has already proved that to a considerable extent our existing road surfaces are inadequate to the tasks that are being placed upon them. Thousands of miles of supposedly high-class roads have simply disintegrated under the impact of a traffic they were never calculated to bear. Other thousands of miles will suffer the same fate before we finally hit upon something that will stand up under the insistent pounding. Concrete seems to be proving its case, and several of the patent stone processes seem capable of development to a degree of perfection that will permit their being used under any conditions of traffic.

It is vitally essential that we should know what each mile of road is to be called upon to bear in the way of traffic, so that we can provide for that amount of wear. The French have the right idea in this particular. Every year the French highway department—the Ponts et Chaussées—takes a census of traffic on every road, the statistics gathered including the number of passing vehicles, their approximate weights and loads, how they are shod, and so forth.

With this information in hand, the highway engineer does not have to work in the dark or resort to guessing. He can tell exactly whether or not a given road is calculated to bear the traffic it will be called upon to carry during the coming year; and if it is not up to the demands made upon it, provision for strengthening it can be made. The absence of any such supervision is one of the great failures of our highway system.

Like unto it is the second failure—lack of adequate maintenance. We have been too prone to build high-class roads and then settle back calmly, as if our whole duty was done, while the roads disintegrated through neglect.

Roads need constant care. Every little hole should be filled and patched before it has a chance to become a big crater. The truck roads of the future will have maintenance men, exactly as the railways have track-walkers constantly watching the tracks. Every imperfection will be mended as soon as it appears. By constant care the highway surface will be as smooth as the traditional billiard-table, permitting uninterrupted communication three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

A transportation utopia is it that we have outlined? Perhaps, and yet we venture the prophecy that our grandchildren, if not their fathers and mothers, will be dwellers in this land of transportation promise, better served by their railways plus their motor freight-carriers than they could possibly be served by either of those mediums alone.

Parted in the Middle

BY JAY GELTZER

Illustrated by De Alton Valentine

ONLY two circumstances to be of future interest attended the birth of George Lester Shaw in the obscure little town of Maplewood, Illinois. He was born the only son of a widowed mother, and he was born with clear blue eyes, a natural Marcel wave to his chestnut hair, and a dimple in his chin. For neither of these circumstances can George Lester be blamed, but both were to contribute their effect to his life in later years, when many sentimental women had done their best—or worst—to spoil him.

From the time when he was two and curly-headed to the time when he was nearly thirty and had parted his name in the middle, the pathway of George Lester Shaw was hedged with adoring hearts. In his early youth women, watching his unsteady steps, used to exclaim emotionally. In his later years girls, admiring him from his chestnut wave to his natty shoes, reacted no less emotionally.

To his widowed mother, undoubtedly, belongs the greater part of the credit, or blame, or whatever it was, for the spoiling of George Lester. For one thing she had the best opportunity, and for another George Lester was her only emotional outlet. At a time when he should have been hustling to keep the kitchen wood-box filled he was snapping out irritably:

"Good Lord! You don't mean to say you need more wood already? Can't you get it this once for yourself?"

And Mrs. Shaw was meekly carrying the wood without protest, instead of hunting a switch.

Later, when most of the boys of his age were hunting jobs, his mother would proudly explain:

"George Lester must have an education—he's such a bright boy!"

And in the face of her unflinching optimism people hesitated to hint that George Lester was acquiring the desired education in the pool-rooms of Maplewood.

Naturally, when his mother became a memory instead of a shielding presence, and the townspeople quite evidently refused to accept him at his mother's valuation, George Lester migrated to the nearby city, finding his level among familiar haunts removed to a larger stage.

At heart G. Lester—he began to part his name in the middle soon after his removal to the city—was neither bad nor vicious. The blame for the years which followed belongs rightfully to those encouraging his belief that ordinary regulations supposed to promote success failed to apply to G. Lester Shaw. At twenty-eight, sleekly pompadoured, neatly silk-socked, G. Lester nursed a brooding sense of injury because fate, assisted by the men over him, kept him from the high place destined for him.

And then, with life beginning to print fine lines of dissatisfaction around his eyes, and discontent beginning to sour all that was sweet and mellow in his disposition, G. Lester married.

The providence which looks after men of the G. Lester type looked after G. Lester in the matter of his marriage; or perhaps it was only another working out of the attraction of opposites. At any rate, Mary Ellis had nothing at all to do with cabarets, jazz bands, and all the things which went to make up G. Lester's life. Some of G. Lester's yellow-fingered intimates hinted acrimoniously regarding the twenty-five dollars in her weekly pay envelope. G. Lester himself thought he loved her for her vivid blue eyes and pink and white face. In reality it was because Mary so obviously believed G. Lester was going to be a very great man.

On a day when they made a Fourth of July pilgrimage to Benton Harbor, he drew

her to a protesting halt before a small green and white frame cottage.

"Let's get married, honey!" he suggested gaily. "Be a sport, Mary. Let's make this a Fourth to be remembered!"

So he married Mary Ellis with his mother's worn gold ring, drawn from his little finger at the proper moment, and found time to smile at the great solemnity of her small face. To G. Lester the marriage was the greatest of his larks, although something in Mary's blue eyes temporarily quieted his gay exuberance. Mary seemed to be taking it all so seriously, making such a life and death business of it!

But to Mary Ellis, with her deep blue eyes, her hair the color of a Kansas wheatfield, and her strangely square little chin, love was not a thing to be taken lightly. Life, for her, had not been a pathway edged with adoring hearts. At an age when she should have been dreaming over her first sweetheart, Mary Ellis was saying briskly:

"Now, Billy, don't spill that all over your very best clothes! Georgie, can't you *ever* remember to wipe your feet when you come in the house?"

She always tempered her reproving words with a smile. In the hard-worked elder sister of a motherless family, that smile was notable.

Later came release in the shape of a stepmother, Chicago, and, still later, the twenty-five-dollar-a-week job as bookkeeper with Kelly & Downs.

II

Now to Mary Ellis marriage meant a tiny flat somewhere shared with G. Lester, slippers to warm, socks to darn, and babies—lots of them. She was that kind of a girl. But to G. Lester Shaw marriage meant a permanent audience voicing unending approval of G. Lester and the privilege of parading as his wife a girl who would, as he put it, "knock all the other Janes cold."

Naturally these widely differing ideals were fated to clash, even as early as the morning after the wedding.

"We won't keep house, we'll board," announced G. Lester firmly. "Most young folks just starting out get stung with the domestic bee, and that's why they don't get along faster. We're going to start right!" His tone intimated that the future before Mr. and Mrs. G. Lester Shaw held unlimited possibilities because of the infinite wisdom of G. Lester. "And for the present, Mary, you had better keep your job. We need the money," he finished lightly.

Mary opened her lips uncertainly.

"Of course, honey," added Lester hastily, seeing her hurt and puzzled expression, "you know it grieves me to death not to be able to take care of you the way I want to; but I'm only trying to do what is best. I don't want my little girl spoiling her pretty hands slaving in a kitchen—"

"But I wouldn't mind it!" protested Mary.

G. Lester's face hardened into a peculiar stubbornness.

"My salary isn't much," he admitted reluctantly. "We couldn't live comfortably on it, but with what you have we could live decently and save"—he hesitated briefly—"save for a house!" he finished as a bright afterthought.

From where she sat at the foot of a cheap iron bedstead, Mary sent him a radiant glance.

"Don't you agree with me, honey?" urged G. Lester.

"Oh, yes!" came instantly from the eager Mary. "To have a house of our own—I hadn't thought of it for years and years! I was thinking of a little three-room flat."

Her face was vaguely wistful as she relinquished the delights of that imaginary flat.

"Nothing like that for us!" declared G. Lester Shaw masterfully, adjusting his necktie with just the right knot. "But we could have a housekeeping room—sort of studio, you know—and have our dinners out."

They went to work together that morning. Except when she saw the thin gold band Lester had given her, Mary Shaw had to pinch herself to realize her changed status.

Going home at night, to be welcomed by Lester with anxious inquiries as to whether his "bebby-girl" was tired, was more heartening. At least it was not as lonely as her before-marriage hall room. They dined at a cheap cabaret, where Lester's crisp chestnut hair and jaunty air immediately drew attention from the peroxided, eye-penciled prima donna.

"Oh, you kiddo!" she sang at him, throwing him a worm-eaten rosebud.

LESTER'S CHESTNUT HAIR AND JAUNTY AIR DREW ATTENTION FROM THE PEROXIDED PRIMA DONNA

And Lester, quite in his element, rose from his table and danced with her, to the applause of the dining guests.

Mary tried to be pleased, involuntarily wishing that Lester had the faculty of making himself less conspicuous.

Presently he came back, flushed and laughing.

"Some girl!" he declared joyously. Then, his eyes taking in her downcast face, he slid his hand under the table, grasping hers. "Cheer up, bebby," he said, his blue eyes tender. "When you get your li'l' self some duds like hers, you'll have 'em all outclassed!"

Mary sent a glance of critical distaste at the bare white back showing almost to the waist-line.

"Isn't she too old for that sort of a dress?"

Lester's blue eyes had turned cold and hard.

"You're jealous, Mary!" he said shortly. "Don't you know one always has to play for the limelight? The ability to advertise yourself is the first principle of success in life."

Mary controlled the ready thought that there were ways and ways, and places and places, to advertise.

"Don't be angry," she begged contritely. "I—this sort of thing is new to me, Les. I haven't been around very much, you know."

His face cleared. He smiled his forgiveness. Tenderness came back to the eyes which had held a china-like hardness.

"You're just my bebby-girl!" he purred affectionately. "But papa's going to take her around and show her all the sights."

An irritated wish that Lester would stop talking down to her as from a great height nagged at Mary, but she did not voice it. She smiled at him instead, the pink-shaded candles throwing a pink glow on her small face with its earnest eyes and her crown of yellow hair.

"My dolly!" admired Lester fatuously.

"When I've got a girl sitting across a table for two, buh-lieve me, bebby, she's gotta have class!"

At the next table a tall man with graying hair turned, surveyed G. Lester from smart brown shoes to wavy hair, and sniffed audibly. Mary flushed, understanding the tall man's frame of mind. Loyally she tilted her chin defiantly at the stranger.

"Isn't it late? Let's go, Les," she urged.

MARY TRIED TO BE PLEASED, INVOLUNTARILY WISHING THAT LESTER HAD THE FACULTY OF MAKING HIMSELF LESS CONSPICUOUS

"Late?" He turned a stare of blank amazement upon her. "Why, bebby-girl, it isn't ten o'clock yet. No, indeed—the fun has hardly begun."

For two long hours they sat on at the little table, while Lester piled up a neat heap of cigarette ends and grew more flushed and boisterous, delighting in his popularity. A chorus of painted girls ran down a runway, smiling at Lester, who tossed back appreciative compliments; but for Mary the fun never began.

Later, lying side by side on the cheap painted bed, G. Lester yawned sleepily.

"Great li'l' ol' time we had tonight, girly! We'll get out o' this dump next week. Then we'll speed up, eh?"

Mary stared into the darkness.

"Ye-es," she agreed finally, with the faintest suspicion of a sigh.

But G. Lester did not hear her, for he was already asleep.

They went to work together again the next morning, with Lester reproaching him-

self noisily for Mary's pale cheeks and heavy eyes.

"Must take better care of my bebby-girl," he said tenderly. "We'll come home early to-night."

"Let's stay home to-night, Les!" Mary's eyes were wistful. "Just by ourselves."

Lester clucked disapproval.

"Stay home? Why, what on earth would we do if we stayed home? What you need, honey, is to get out into the world a little more."

And his amazement was so apparent that Mary lacked courage to insist.

III

THE process of livening up Mary was not altogether successful. They found a one-room studio apartment, but such apartments on a scale to satisfy the critical Lester were not cheap. Sixty dollars a month they paid for the crowded and inconvenient room; but Lester was jubilant.

"This place has class," he announced importantly. "We could ask anybody here and not feel ashamed. That's what you want to do, honey—surround yourself with people and things with class, if you ever want to get anywhere. Those dubs you've been trailing with haven't any pep."

"But—" Mary looked up at him round-eyed from her task of making the davenport by day into the uncomfortable bed by night. "What are people who have class, Lester?"

"Oh, people with good clothes and money to spend"—carelessly.

"That kind of people don't seem to take to me," demurred Mary.

"Because you're such a chilly little somebody!" he returned instantly. "Why don't you warm up a bit to some of the people who come here? You could have all the boys crazy over you."

She stopped her work to look at him. "Would you like that, Lester?"

"Bet your boots I would! Ain't nobody got my li'l' queen outclassed."

"But I don't want to be pretty for anybody but you!" she said rebelliously.

"Old stuff!" he replied contemptuously. "Ain't you mine? I should worry if you were to flirt a bit and make all the boys hate me!"

A brief silence, while Mary wrestled with the odd hurt sustained from his careless words. Then, hesitating:

"Lester—"

"Yep?"

"I don't think these people who come here really care anything about us. They come just to be going somewhere, and because you're a good spender. I—I think we are spending too much money, Les. We haven't saved anything in three months."

Lester was not a little amused at her lack of sophistication.

"Of course that's why they come, honey-girl! Give and take—that's the rule of friendship nowadays. And you wouldn't want me to be a tightwad, would you, girly?" He came over and placed careless arms around her. "If we haven't saved anything this three months, we'll make up for it in the next three." He drew her face up to his tenderly. "Bless her little heart, is her worrying? You just leave all the worrying to papa Lester!"

"Don't, Les!"

She had a strange smothering sensation of millions and millions of feathers weighing her down.

"Don't you know Les will take care of you, honey? Don't you know I haven't a thought in the world except to make you happy?"

"Of course," agreed Mary loyally. "Of course!"

IV

To Mary, as time went on, Lester was Lester with his charming smile, his gay carelessness, his heedlessness of obligations piling up. Some day, of course, he would gain recognition, and the days of struggle would be over. In the mean time she worked willingly, her dream of marriage receding instead of advancing.

During that first winter they made little progress toward the cherished ideal of a house. Lester lost his position, and it was some weeks before he found another. The small raise in salary that Mary earned was immediately swallowed up in the endless tide of expenses which engulfed them.

Lester treated the news of the raise as a matter of little consequence.

"It isn't much," he said largely, "but it will help. Let's go down to Louis's to celebrate."

Mary's pretty mouth tightened. Lester had been out of work, and it seemed to her he was less right about this particular thing than usual. There were the bills; and bills should come before celebrations, according to Mary.

Quietly preparing to go with him, she realized that she was tired to exhaustion. Before marriage she accepted their frequent nights out in the belief that they were necessary, the parlor being preempted by the landlady, a fat, becurled person in black satin perpetually seeking a successor to her late husband. After marriage, Mary had reasoned, Lester would undoubtedly be different.

But if she expected marriage to make a difference in Lester, Mary was to be disappointed. Lester wore the obligations of his marriage lightly. Finding the world a pleasant place, he saw no need of change. Months slipped by; fall changed to winter snows; the lake changed from limpid blue to icebound gray; and then the tall, gaunt trees began to put out the tender leafage of spring.

"Let's go to Lincoln Park to-day," suggested Mary wistfully, one Sunday in late spring.

Lester stretched resignedly where he lay on the cheap davenport, entirely surrounded by Sunday papers, cigarette stubs, and apple peelings. His Marcel wave was just as perfect as of old, his finger-nails just as brilliantly manicured, and he had prospered under the influence of marriage. He was heavier, handsomer, and his clothes—as yet unpaid for—were more fashionable in cut. He wore London tweeds instead of cheap domestic serge now, developing a nice taste in clothes, a fondness for richly hued ties of heavy silk, and an increased appetite for the cabarets.

Always there was some pressing need of Lester's. He simply had to have a new suit—"for of course, darling, you want me to look my best when I go gunning for a new job. A fellow can't get by nowadays unless he looks like a million dollars."

Reluctantly Mary had suppressed the disloyal thought that occasionally people waited to get the million before they put up the million-dollar front. Lester was right—he needed the suit; and the same with the heavy, fur-trimmed overcoat. It paid to look prosperous. Undoubtedly! How could a man demand a good salary when he looked like thirty cents?

But, strangely enough, the position Lester finally accepted paid him less instead of more.

"You see, honey," explained Lester, "that other job paid a little more. Sure! But I'd have had to work Saturday afternoons, and that would have been too much for me."

"I suppose," agreed Mary heavily.

Suddenly and surprisingly she wanted to shriek aloud from jangled nerves. Something of Mary's sweetness was wearing thin under the constant strain of being a working person and an ornamental wife at the same time. Occasionally the bitter truth obtruded that Lester, for all his charming ways, never considered anything in the world but himself and his personal needs and tastes.

He was working again, and this particular Sunday the room was littered with automobile catalogues. Mary had an uneasy wish to get out into the air and away from them. In some uncanny way they seemed to stifle her with their hint of impending obligation.

"Here's a good buy, babe," he called to her. "A second-hand Sluick for five hundred. Bet I could make a little car like that hum some!" Eagerly he read down the fascinating column. "And here's another good buy!"

"Let's go out, Les," urged Mary anxiously. "It's such a nice day, and I don't feel well. I—I need some air."

Lester looked attentively at her for the first time, seeing the slight hollowness of her cheeks and the weariness of her eyes.

"All right, bebby," he consented reluctantly. "I'll go with you." Lazily he got to his feet. "You do look a bit off your feed, but walking in Lincoln Park on a Sunday is my idea of nigger heaven."

He dressed, lingering over the arrangement of his tie.

"All right," he acquiesced at last, stick in hand, hat on at just the proper angle. "Let's go out and view the common herd."

Lincoln Park was crowded with the usual Sunday complement of babies, parents, lovers, and just friends. Mary, watching an adorable baby girl, highly ornamented with pink ribbon, experienced a sudden throb of hunger as the tiny mite smiled at her.

"Oh, Les!" She caught Lester's sleeve with clutching fingers, and a wave of yearning tenderness shot through her. "See that cunning baby?"

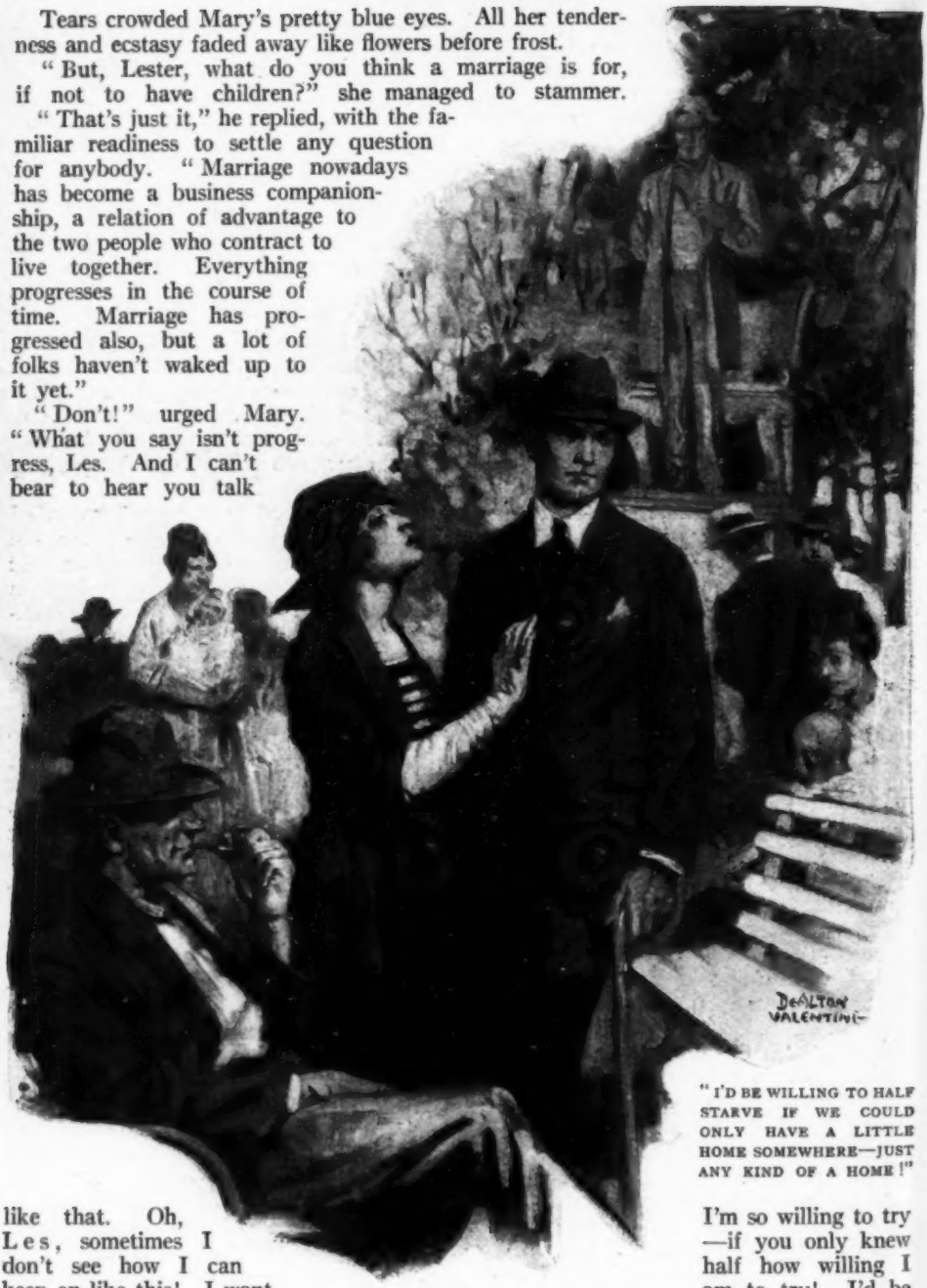
"Nothing but babies!" grumbled Lester. "Lord, but people are fools to tie themselves down to nothing but noise and sticky fingers and bottles! It holds a man back."

Tears crowded Mary's pretty blue eyes. All her tenderness and ecstasy faded away like flowers before frost.

"But, Lester, what do you think a marriage is for, if not to have children?" she managed to stammer.

"That's just it," he replied, with the familiar readiness to settle any question for anybody. "Marriage nowadays has become a business companionship, a relation of advantage to the two people who contract to live together. Everything progresses in the course of time. Marriage has progressed also, but a lot of folks haven't waked up to it yet."

"Don't!" urged Mary. "What you say isn't progress, Les. And I can't bear to hear you talk like that. Oh, Les, sometimes I don't see how I can keep on like this! I want just a little place where we can be quiet, just you and I. And, Les"—she gulped with emotion—"I—I want a baby of my own—yours and mine, Les. We can live on what you are making, if we try; and I'm so willing to try—if you only knew half how willing I am to try! I'd be willing to half starve if we could only have a little home somewhere—just any kind of a home!"



"I'D BE WILLING TO HALF STARVE IF WE COULD ONLY HAVE A LITTLE HOME SOMEWHERE—JUST ANY KIND OF A HOME!"

She was trembling with her own earnestness, the absurd conviction seizing her that

upon his reply depended some great crisis in their lives.

G. Lester gently disengaged his arm from hers.

"Now you aren't talking like my clever little girl at all," he objected good-naturedly. "Don't you know that some day we will have our own little home, and a better home than we could have by throwing up all we've worked to get? And there's time enough for babies. Keep your looks, girly. I don't want you tied down. Don't you s'pose old G. Lester knows best, honey?"

"I'm twenty-seven," reminded Mary heavily.

G. Lester cleared his throat with what was for him an unusual diffidence.

"Well, fact is, Mary, I've some good news for you — something better than a baby. I bought a dandy little car on time yesterday."

A long silence.

"Did you?" said Mary dully at last.

Again she was having that odd sensation of millions of feathers weighing her down.

"Yep!" enthusiastically. "Thought you needed to be out in the air more. You know, honey-lamb, I want you to be well and strong."

He bent down with exaggerated solicitude, and a passing girl giggled with envy. G. Lester looked after her with an appreciative eye, preening himself consciously.

"So you can keep on working!" said a malicious inner voice to Mary.

"Aren't you glad?" persisted Lester, with something of injury in his pleasing voice.

"How are we going to pay for it?" asked Mary in a stifled voice.

"Now *that*," returned G. Lester importantly, "you can leave to me!"

V

WHICH, as it happened, was exactly what Mary did. For Mary, growing more listless daily in an attempt to meet the exactions of a life for which she was never intended, fell ill of a wasting illness which laid her flat on her back, only remotely interested in the problems which had been part of her daily life; and upon G. Lester's unaccustomed shoulders fell the burden under which Mary had collapsed.

Perhaps an abrupt holding of the mirror of facts to her unwilling eyes was in some small part responsible for her collapse. After a hard day at the office, putting on her wraps at closing-time, she heard Kelly, genial junior partner of the firm, go into his partner's office to exchange a bit of gossip to finish off the day.

"I was in court to-day," he guffawed.

Mary smiled in sympathy. She liked big, genial Kelly; everybody did.

"What for?" from the interested Mr. Downs.

"Why, we've had an old colored laundress for years, and all this time she's been supporting a worthless husband. It seems that lately he's been casting sheep's eyes at a younger damsel, and neglecting the goose which furnished the golden eggs; so old mammy turned against him and had him jailed for non-support. I had to testify to her good character, and I give you my word it was as good as a play to see his injured expression!"

"Queer what these colored women will stand from a man," said Downs absently.

"Lord, man!" returned Kelly emphatically. "It isn't only the black women! We've a white woman right here in our office killing herself to provide a worthless husband with luxuries otherwise beyond his pocketbook. I saw them the other night in a cabaret when I was entertaining trade; and of all the insufferably conceited jackasses I ever saw, he's the worst!"

Mary's heart slowed down in a panic of fright.

"You mean Mrs. Shaw?" inquired Downs.

And then it was that the agonizing sensation of weakness descended upon Mary. Her smile faded, her fingers stiffened to the brim of her hat. She was overcome with fear lest one or the other should open the door and find her there. It was of Lester, her husband, that they were speaking —Lester with his blue eyes and careless ways.

"I mean Mrs. Shaw," agreed Kelly. "She's a fine woman, with plenty of brains, but with too much loyalty for her own good."

"Self-sacrifice," said Downs thoughtfully, "is the most insidious poison in the world. There's a good example of what it can do. Take this fellow Shaw, for instance. He's a worthless pup now—I'll grant you that; but I believe he's got good stuff in him, if he had a chance to develop it. Shouldn't wonder if he wouldn't have turned out considerable of a man except

that he's had too much petticoat worship. His mother spoiled him in the beginning, no doubt, and now his wife is finishing the job." He laughed with a tinge of regret. "Don't know but that it's hard lines for a fellow to be born with curly hair, a dimple in his chin, and an engaging smile. It's apt to prove a handicap."

From the outer office came a soft thud. Uneasily Downs looked at Kelly.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he said in consternation. "I thought Mrs. Shaw was gone long ago. Wouldn't have had her listen in for worlds! She's been looking peaked enough lately."

After a moment he tiptoed to the door, and the sight which met his eyes drew from him a violent expletive of concern. Flat upon the floor beside her closed desk lay young Mrs. Shaw, with her eyes closed in unconsciousness.

Regretting their unpremeditated unkindness, the two men took her home in a taxicab, and there a disinterested doctor pronounced peremptory decision.

"No work for at least three months," he said briskly. Then, softening at the horrified appeal in her eyes, he made brief explanation. "It can't be done, young lady. Nobody can hold down two jobs at the same time, and you've been burning the candle at both ends, besides. Now you've got to pay for it!"

"But what shall we do?" whispered Mary weakly.

"That," said Mr. Downs with great relish, "will be G. Lester's problem."

Then, partly because Mary Shaw looked so much like his own daughter, and partly because of his soft heart, he sat down and patted her hand.

"Now don't fret yourself, my dear," he said encouragingly. "This is G. Lester's chance to prove what's in him. Let him pull his share of the load for a while. Let him carry his own responsibilities. It 'll do him good—you'll see! You can't help a man too much without weakening him, and you can't save a man the hard blows without taking something vital out of him. Men were made to struggle, and through that very struggling to grow; and he *needs* to grow, that husband of yours. Give him his chance now. If he gets in too tight a place, I'll help him out; but he's not to know!"

A smile of grim enjoyment twitched his lips.

"It won't be any too easy," he went on, "to find a job that 'll pay him enough to keep you both, he not being exactly used to hard work. When he's tried and failed to land one, send him to me. I'll give him a job, but I give you my word it's going to be the hardest job I can find!"

Awkwardly he patted her hand again.

"So you just sit tight, my dear, and don't worry about the money end. Your salary will go on—you've earned it; but G. Lester isn't to know. I'm going to bank it for you against an emergency. When G. Lester gets ready to quit parting his name in the middle, then you can tell him about it."

Mary Shaw smiled whitely.

"I heard what you said—in the office," she confessed. "And lately I've been thinking a lot. Maybe you're right. Anyhow, my way hasn't worked. But one thing—if he's selfish and inconsiderate, if he cares for the wrong things in life, who's to blame? Not Lester! As he was molded in the beginning, he is now."

"Well," said Mr. Downs, "he's due to be molded a leetle mite differently now!"

VI

Not interested in bath-room faucets which dripped, or in Lester's unpressed trousers, or in chops at an unheard-of price, was the white Mary who lay on the davenport by day, on the bed by night, with face averted. And to G. Lester, who in his way had loved Mary, the very sight of her indifference was disquieting.

"Don't you want something to eat, honey?" he would inquire miserably, tiptoeing to the bed after shading the glaring lights with a folded newspaper. "I'm no prize chef, but I could make out to boil you an egg."

A listless shake of the head from Mary.

"All I want to do is rest," she would reply weakly.

Looking at her small, thin face, the eyelids drooped with weariness of their own weight, a lump would come into the throat of G. Lester. This room, with its petty makeshifts and its inconveniences masked as advantages, was no place for Mary to be sick in, he thought vaguely. Mary had never stinted him. Mary ought not to be stinted now in her helplessness.

"I'll look out for you, honey!" he whispered, stroking the curling bronze hair. "Just you rest up, and papa Lester 'll look

out for his girl; but I gotta get a job that pays more to do it," he added ruefully.

Abruptly he stopped. From under her closed eyelids had appeared a shining trace of tears.

"Aw, now, honey girl—" protested G. Lester.

Although he did not know it, the tears were not of unhappiness. For the first time in his life G. Lester was considering somebody else's needs before his own.

"You're not used to working hard," objected Mary faintly.

"I gotta work hard now," G. Lester vigorously reassured her.

In which, after various encounters with tradesmen accustomed to looking for their money to Mary's sturdy sense of rectitude, and unwilling to accept G. Lester's airy promises of future payment, he found he was quite correct.

"Gee!" he sighed dispiritedly one night. "I never knew how large a hunk out of a fellow's earnings it took just to buy a couple o' pork chops. These profiteers oughta be lynched!"

Hearing him, the first trace of a smile came to Mary's wan face.

"Have you landed something better, Les?"

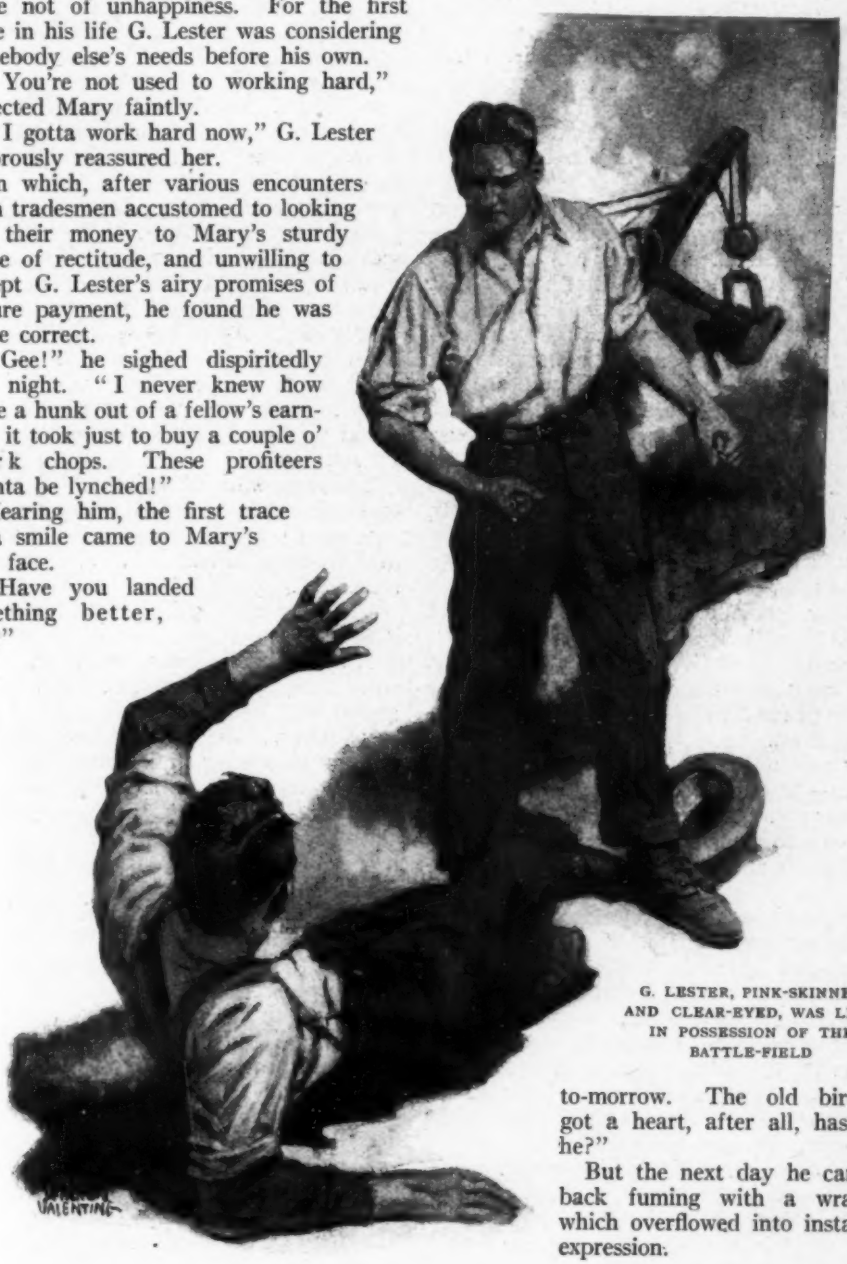
"Not yet," confessed G. Lester, with rather less of his usual self-confidence; "but to-morrow I'll surely get something."

"Mr. Downs said he'd get you a job if you wanted it."

Instantly G. Lester recovered his customary optimism.

"Why didn't you tell me? I'll see him to-morrow. The old bird's got a heart, after all, hasn't he?"

But the next day he came back fuming with a wrath which overflowed into instant expression.



G. LESTER, PINK-SKINNED AND CLEAR-EYED, WAS LEFT IN POSSESSION OF THE BATTLE-FIELD

"Fine friend, that boss of yours!"

"I always found him kind and just," defended Mary loyally. "He found you something?"

"He found me a job!" bitterly from G. Lester, striding up and down the limited floor-space excitedly. "Bossing a gang of laborers, under the supervision of a red-headed Irishman of a contractor! A black-shirt job—for *me!*"

"I suppose you will refuse it?" said Mary wearily.

"Refuse it?" snorted G. Lester. "I don't dare! The bills around here must be paid somehow, if we are to keep on eating!"

And, hearing the ring of acceptance in his voice, the tiny flicker of hope in Mary's heart gained strength.

"He hinted," said G. Lester hotly, "that I wouldn't be able to fill the job—*me!*"

If he had but known it, at that very moment the genial Mr. Downs was strewing Lester's future path with difficulties.

"I'm sending you a new man, Pat," he was telephoning the red-headed contractor. "You won't think much of him at the start. He's soft, and he's been soft all his life. Put the screws onto him, Pat! In other words, treat him rough!"

"Sure an' this is after being no school for young college bucks!" returned Pat Malloy cordially. "So I'll be doing just that thing!"

He surveyed G. Lester contemptuously, the next morning, on his arrival in all the glory of fur-trimmed overcoat and pointed-toed shoes.

"Sure an' it's John D. himself just arrived—or did ye think ye were attending a par-rty?" he inquired bitterly. "It's enough to make the men quit on me, just having to lamp ye in that get-up. Or maybe ye're the prisident of a bank wandered in by mistake?"

Something which justified his mother's adoration and Mary's faith stirred feebly to life in G. Lester in that moment.

"I wore these clothes because they're all I've got," he snapped shortly, his face flaming with angry color. "If you care to advance me money, I'll go and buy others, so your sensitive men won't be offended by the sight of me."

Blue eyes met Irish blue eyes in open challenge.

"An' how'll I know that ye'll be sticking to your job long enough to pay me back?" queried Pat insultingly. "By the look of ye, ye're more fit for a lady's pink tea than a contracting job!"

G. Lester repressed his fury with some difficulty.

"I'll stick," he returned shortly. "I've got to. I've a sick wife on my hands to support. What's more, I'll make good just so I'll have the opportunity of telling you to go to blazes some day!"

A silence. Presently Pat Malloy drew a couple of bills from his pocket.

"Being a born fool, I'll bite," he said reluctantly. "Around the corner is a store, a working man's store—not the kind ye're used to, beyond doubt, but one ye'll be better acquainted with prisently. Tell old Jake to fit ye out with a sweater, an' wool socks, an' shoes that won't let those little tootsy-wootsies get frost-bitten, an' a cap to protect those handsome ears from the cold winds. An' for the love o' Gawd, leave that fur-trimmed coat for Jake to mind for ye, else the boys 'll be asking a raise in their pay on the stringth of it. When ye *look* like work, come back, an' I'll start ye in."

Tingling with humiliation, G. Lester took the money and turned away.

"You've got the upper hand now," he said between his teeth; "but I'll show you some day!"

VII

BEHIND him, shrewd blue eyes on the sturdy retreating shoulders, Pat Malloy smiled with delight.

"Scrappy!" he summed up. "Maybe he's got guts, after all, in spite of the Chesterfield get-up. Well, it won't take long to find out. If he sticks, he'll get by!"

Later he greeted G. Lester, clad in heavy brogues and blue shirt, with a short, blunt question.

"What's your name, lad?"

"Shaw," from the sullen G. Lester.

"And the rest of it, so's I can enter ye on the pay-roll."

Facing those gimlet blue eyes boring deep below the surface, G. Lester suddenly and surprisingly restored the shorn prefix to his name.

"George," he said.

"Take charge of this wing, George," began Pat Malloy bruskly. "I'll be over on the other side. If ye need me, sing out. Check these men in as they come in through that gate, check them out as they

go out through the other. They're paid by the load, this bunch. See that they empty their loads, or they'll be carting the same load in and out all day, knowing ye're green as grass. They're pretty slick, these wops."

And that was the beginning of what was to be a never-forgotten period for G. Lester. On the first day, after nine hours in the brisk, stinging air, with his unaccustomed muscles bent to unfamiliar usage, he hurried home on feet which were an aching torment.

"Tell yer missis to fill ye a lunch-pail to-morrow," called Pat Malloy after him. "And to fill it with food as 'll stick to your ribs. We make coffee on the job here, all ye can drink."

Nodding a bitter assent, G. Lester hurried away, fuming over the added indignity of a lunch-pail; but Mary was waiting, alone and sick, and suddenly the thought of Mary had become a refuge that he had earned by the toil put forth for her sake.

It was dusk when he came in on feet which stumbled with weariness. Mary shrank in alarm.

"Why, it's you!" she stammered as he switched on the light, and he realized that his unfamiliar working clothes had startled her. "How—how did you get along?"

"I'm tired," confessed G. Lester, sinking down and bringing his head to rest against her breast. "Gee, but it's good to get back to you, honey! I'll cook you something to eat presently. I could eat a few beefsteaks myself!"

"How pink your face is, and how clear your eyes!" said Mary gently. "You look different somehow, Les."

"I'm going to stick," informed G. Lester grimly. "Just to show that redhead I can make good. He thinks I can't!"

Mary's lip trembled sympathetically after he told her of his reception by Pat Malloy.

"It's hard for you!" she said.

Unexpectedly G. Lester gathered her two weak hands into his.

"Nothing's too hard to do for you, Mary," he said breathlessly. "Somehow it seems to give me more of a right to you, working with my hands this way, instead of leaving most of it to you."

When he had gone to begin his inexpert preparation of dinner, Mary wiped away a few tears of sheer gladness, which blinded her to the culinary demerits of lumpy potatoes and meat raw in spots and scorched in others.

"I expect it was mostly my fault," she reflected, watching G. Lester devour a mighty dinner hungrily. "Letting him always dodge whatever unpleasant turned up, and being so anxious to spare him."

Days followed in which G. Lester encountered difficulties. The ridicule of his associates, for instance; and the need of exerting his authority over men who disliked him; and the times when he had to make unhesitating decisions with little experience behind him to serve as a guide.

Then there was one Giuseppe, who challenged his authority in a battle of fists, retiring in bloody confusion to meditate his lack of wisdom, while G. Lester, pink-skinned and clear-eyed, was left in possession of the battle-field.

Upon that day Pat Malloy let his hand drop approvingly on G. Lester's increasingly sturdy shoulder.

"Ye've got grit, son," he approved. "An' the rest will come."

Surprisingly, a considerable part of G. Lester's rancor toward Pat Malloy melted away in the surge of gratification at his praise.

"I was green," he muttered; "but I'm learning!"

"Any man can learn phwat wants to learn," pointed out Pat Malloy earnestly. "It's them phwat won't be taught as never gets anywheres."

From that day G. Lester began to perceive a new standard of values.

"Things don't matter as much as the folks who have them," he told Mary hesitatingly one night. "I was wrong about that, just as I was wrong about so many things. Take old Pat, now—I hated him in the beginning, but I was wrong and he was right. He didn't have to believe I knew it all just because I was dolled up like a visiting lord. It was up to me to show him. Well"—he smiled happily—"I think I'm showing him!"

He was showing everybody in those days—G. Lester Shaw from Maplewood, Illinois. Gradually the men under him lost their sense of antagonism as he lost his own sense of superiority. And, seeing the fair walls of a splendid building rearing up where had been only emptiness, G. Lester began to take a pleasure in his work.

"It gets you feeling that you've been part of a big job," he confessed to Mary.

"Maybe one reason I never made good before was because I never happened to try anything I liked to do."

"Would you like," suggested Mary demurely, "to go to a cabaret to-night? I'm strong enough to go now." A pause. "I'll be going back to work next week," she said then, stroking his curly hair. "My job is waiting."

"Job be blowed!" retorted G. Lester inelegantly. "I want you waiting for me every night when I come home. As to the cabaret stuff, I don't seem to hanker for it nowadays. I'm tired nights, and a good book or the first movie show are about my speed in life." A pause. "What d'you think, Mary?" he added excitedly. "Old Pat came to me to-day and said if I wanted to stay, he'd give me a chance to work up to a partnership! Seems the old boy is head of the works, with Downs to back h'm, and I never knew it. So I up and told him of a few ways we could broaden the business, running more than one big job at a time; and he was tickled pink. He says that if you and I would like to have a bungalow out near where he lives, he'll build on the lot next to his, and we can pay him back when we get the coin. He wants you to meet his wife and the kids." Another pause. "Say, Mary"—G. Lester became exceedingly diffident—"I feel differently about that, too. Pat Malloy says he wouldn't take a million for any of his youngsters, and—"

He stopped in alarm.

"Why, Mary—you're crying!" he said anxiously.

"I'm crying because I'm happy!" sobbed Mary, in her heart the blessed surety of a house with clinging vines, a bedroom done in white, and a cradle filled with a tiny replica of G. Lester himself. "All this time I've been afraid to tell you. I couldn't go back to work if I wanted to, Les; but Mr. Downs has let my salary go on all this time, and it's banked for an emergency!"

She smiled, all the winsome charm which belonged to her showing forth in that smile.

"We'll call him G. Lester," she informed the petrified Lester roguishly.

"G. Lester?" said that highly indignant person. "No, Mary—my name's George!"

SPRING AT THE DOOR

Ardors and desires once more
Knock at the heavy-hearted door.
"Let me in—good news I bring;
Let me in—for I am Spring!

"Lo, I kiss the rivers free,
Kiss back the blossoms on the tree,
Blow a kiss from my red mouth,
And birds come singing from the south.

"Yea, my lips so warm and red
Kiss life into the listless dead,
And all the lost and lovely faces
Come back to the old lovely places.

"In earth's pallid cheek the rose
Once more delicately glows;
Freed again the blue and gold
From the prison of the cold.

"All the treasures lying hid
Under winter's iron lid
Burst their frozen locks, and gleam
In the woodlands like a dream.

"Sad heart, put your sorrow by!
Green the earth and blue the sky;
Joy is back on happy wing;
Let me in—for I am Spring!"

Richard Le Gallienne

How Shakespeare Is Abused on the Modern Stage

THE STRANGE BLUNDERS AND INEXCUSABLE DISTORTIONS OF THE MASTER'S TEXT OF WHICH EVEN EMINENT ACTORS AND PRODUCERS HAVE OFTEN BEEN GUILTY

By Rudolph de Cordova

MOST of us, probably, have wondered, when seeing a play by Shakespeare, what would have happened if the master dramatist had been here in the flesh to give the production the "once over" enjoyed by the living playwright; if he could have been consulted in the selection of the actors, could have shown them how he wished the parts to be interpreted, could have criticised the scenery and supervised the thousand and one details of a stage presentation.

To-day, when the public knows as much about the theater as the players themselves, it is hardly necessary to say that the author of a play is almost invariably present at the rehearsals. He can explain to the actors the views he holds on the interpretation of each part, the inflection he desires in the speaking of each line and the emotion he wishes each sentence to convey.

Moreover, the modern playwright generally gives full information about his characters—their age, appearance, mannerisms, and the like—in notes, after the method of the novelist, so that these points may be quite clear in the minds of the actors. In Shakespeare's time, so far as we know, this device was not in vogue, and there was only one way for the dramatist to communicate such necessary facts about the people of the play—by direct statement, either in the course of the dialogue or in soliloquy.

Examples of both these methods will readily occur to the student of Shakespeare. *Othello,* for instance, describing himself, says:

> Haply for I am black,
> And have not those soft parts of conversation
> That chamberers have; or for I am declined
> Into the vale of years; yet that's not much.

Here, in addition to the reference to the Moor's complexion, there is a distinct indication that he was past his prime, although "not much." There is, however, no such direct evidence as to his age as is given us in the case of *Iago.*

In this connection I recall an amusing incident. A friend who had been engaged to play *Iago* asked me to talk the part over with him, as he had some regard for my opinions. It was not very long before he introduced what is, to the actor, the always interesting question of the make-up for the character.

"I'm not going to make *Iago* look as old as I've generally seen him represented," said my friend.

"Why, how old do you intend to make him?" I asked, rather surprised at the statement.

"Under fifty," was the reply. "Say about forty-five."

"I should make him look younger than that," I said, "seeing that he is only twenty-eight."

EDITORIAL NOTE—The author of this article is a veteran actor, playwright, and journalist, who has produced or directed several of his own plays. Born in the West Indies and educated in England, he has spent much time in America, and his work is well known on both sides of the Atlantic. He has been a lifelong student of Shakespeare, and has acted a long list of Shakespearian parts—"in some plays," he says, "practically every one of the male characters."

"How do you know he is only twenty-eight?"

"Because he says so himself."

"Where? I know every line of the part. I've studied it for weeks, and nowhere does he say such a thing!"

"Doesn't he say, 'I have looked upon the world for four times seven years'?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed my friend. "Do you know it never occurred to me that the words meant *Iago* was that age?"

What he thought the words meant I was never able to find out. Yet that man was not uneducated—or ought not to have been, for he had taken his degree at one of the most famous universities in England.

These two instances have not been selected specially to prove my point. Similar ones abound in the Shakespearian plays.

In "As You Like It," for instance, we know that *Orlando* was young and that *Jaques* was old, although I once met a distinguished actor playing the latter part who was not aware of the fact. He was acting with one of the most famous female stars in the country — a woman with a European as well as an American reputation—and he made up *Jaques* with a curly black wig and a clean-shaven face. He looked, perhaps, thirty-five. We were talking about his performance one day, and I ventured to ask why he represented the character as a young man.

"Why shouldn't *Jaques* be a young man?" he asked.

"Not only because the words he speaks and his philosophy of life are not those of a young man," I answered, "but because Shakespeare describes him as an old man."

"Here is a copy of the play," he said, handing me the book. "Show me where there is the least justification for your latter statement."

I turned to the scene between *Audrey* and *Touchstone*, after *Jaques* has prevented them being married by *Sir Oliver Martext*, and put my finger on the line:

> The priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman's saying.

He took the book from me.

"You are quite right and I am quite wrong," he said frankly. Then he smiled expansively, as he added: "But we don't play that scene, and the public doesn't know its Shakespeare as you do!"

And as long as he continued to play the part, *Jaques*, the "old gentleman," the friend of the banished duke, who lived in the Forest of Arden and would never have dreamed of shaving his beard, walked "under the shade of melancholy boughs" with clean-shaven face and black curly hair without a trace of gray in it.

THE QUESTION OF HAMLET'S AGE

Much controversial ink has been shed upon the question of *Hamlet's* age; and yet it seems difficult to understand how any one who reads the text with an unprejudiced mind can find matter for any discussion of the subject. The Danish prince was thirty years old in the fifth act, and he must therefore have been twenty-nine earlier in the play, for several months, obviously, elapse during the course of the action.

The direct evidence of *Hamlet's* age is contained in the following speeches:

> HAMLET—"How long hast thou been a grave-maker?"
>
> GRAVE-DIGGER—"Of all the days i' the year I came to 't that day that our last king *Hamlet* overcame *Fortinbras*.
>
> HAMLET—"How long is that since?"
>
> GRAVE-DIGGER—"Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young *Hamlet* was born. . . . I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years."

Further, but indirect, evidence on this point is to be found in the play that *Hamlet* caused to be acted before the court.

No one will need reminding that, after *Polonius* has taken the players to see them "well bestowed," *Hamlet* asks the *First Actor* whether he could "study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert" in the text. Bearing in mind the length of the interpolation, and *Hamlet's* emotional condition at the time, it can scarcely be possible to doubt that the speech he inserted is the one beginning:

> Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
> Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground;
> And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
> About the world have twelve thirties been,
> Since Love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
> Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

This is no doubt a personal touch, indicating the length of time that *Hamlet's* father and mother had been married before the former was killed. It confirms the conclusion that the prince was about twenty-nine, for the murder, as *Ophelia* states,

happened four months before the play scene.

It is a frequently introduced piece of stage business for the actor, after speaking the famous soliloquy ending with—

> The play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king—

to begin composing the speech he has told the player he wished inserted. Once I heard an actor, instead of suggesting the speech referring to the that time *Hamlet's* father and mother had been married, begin reciting, quite audibly, the speech of *Lucianus:*

> Thoughts black, drugs fit, hands apt, and time agreeing—

thus indicating that this was the speech *Hamlet* wrote into the dialogue. Now the poisoning of the king by *Lucianus* was part of the original play, and therefore could not have been introduced by *Hamlet.* It occurs in the " dumb show," which is never represented in the play as acted on the modern stage, but the action of it is clearly set out in the text, so that the ancient audience knew exactly what was the purpose of the play.

In spite of Shakespeare's emphatic reference to *Hamlet's* age, I recall a distinguished actor, obsessed with the idea of appearing very young on the stage, who made the prince twenty years old, altering the text to suit his innovation, and thereby ruining the psychology of the character.

Equally wrong was another famous actor of international reputation. In accordance with the modern custom, when announced to play this great part, he was interviewed on his views of the character, instead of letting them appear from his performance. He stated that it was his intention to represent *Hamlet* as a man of twenty-five.

WAS THE GRAVE-DIGGER AN OLD MAN?

When the interviewer pointed out the *Grave-Digger's* remarks, quoted above, the actor replied that he did not attach any importance to them as direct evidence, for " the *Grave-Digger* merely spoke with the garrulity of old age."

Now the *Grave-Digger,* who had been at his work, " man and boy, thirty years," could not have been more than from forty-five to fifty—although it is true that he is usually represented on the stage as much older than that. It is exceedingly arbitrary, to say the least of it, to discard his statement as that of a senile babbler.

Moreover, an actor who decides to make *Hamlet* a young man of twenty or twenty-five ignores two other passages that prove him to have been some years older. We read that *Yorick's* skull had " lain in the earth three and twenty years," and that *Hamlet* remembered him as " a fellow of infinite jest and most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times," the prince adds.

Had *Hamlet* been no more than twenty-five, he could have been only two years old when *Yorick* died. This would make it highly improbable that he could have ridden " a thousand times " on *Yorick's* back, and quite impossible that he could recall the dead courtier's witticisms.

The *Grave-Digger* is not the only character in the Shakespearian gallery to be made much older than he really is. *Capulet* and *Lady Capulet,* in " Romeo and Juliet," suffer in this way, for they are always represented as decidedly middle-aged; yet the *Nurse* tells *Juliet:*

> I saw your mother much upon these years
> That you are now a maid.

Juliet was a fortnight and odd days under fourteen, though the text is always altered to make her eighteen. *Lady Capulet,* therefore, must have been under thirty.

As for the *Nurse,* she is usually acted as almost in her dotage; yet she wet-nursed *Juliet,* who was the same age as her own daughter *Susan.* She must therefore have been somewhere about *Lady Capulet's* age.

SOME FAMOUS HEROINES

The way in which Shakespeare considers the personal appearance of his characters, when it is essential for the audience to know it, is no less striking than is his insistence on their age. " The Merchant of Venice " furnishes several instances of this. *Portia,* we know, was fair, for—

> Her sunny locks
> Hang on her temples like a golden fleece.

Yet I once saw a *Portia* who, with an arrogant disregard of the text which would have been impossible had she been playing in the work of a modern author, wore her own dark hair. Moreover, as *Portia* impersonated a man without her lack of stature being remarked, it is reasonable to

conclude that she was not as short as the actress who represented her on that occasion. It was *Nerissa* who, robed as the doctor's clerk, looked like "a little scrubbed boy."

Hero, in "Much Ado About Nothing," was "too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise," thus reproducing the physical characteristics of *Nerissa* and *Celia*. Yet I have seen actresses selected for *Hero* who were taller than the *Beatrice*. As *Beatrice* was in all respects *Hero's* opposite, she probably resembled *Portia* and *Rosalind*.

Rosalind was fair and "more than common tall," for *Oliver* describes her thus:

> The boy is fair,
> Of female favor, and bestows himself
> Like a ripe sister.

Celia was "low, and browner than her brother." Her complexion, when *Oliver* saw her in the forest, must have carried out the statement she made in the early part of the play about besmirching her face "with a kind of umber." I have, however, often seen the *Celia* as tall as the *Rosalind*, or even taller, thus making the lines absurd and destroying the whole idea of their disguise. I have seen *Rosalind* made dark and *Celia* fair, though the words of the text were retained. Indeed, so far as my memory serves me, in all the many productions of "As You Like It" that I have seen I cannot recall any representative of *Celia* who darkened her face in the forest scenes to make it conform with the text. I also know of only one *Celia* and *Oliver* who, in their acting, ever attempted to realize *Orlando's* statement about them in the last act—that they fell violently in love with each other at first sight.

Phœbe, the almost tragic figure in this wonderful comedy of friendship, who had "bugle eyeballs and black silk hair," I have seen wearing the actress's own golden hair, for she refused to hide it under a black wig.

PERVERSIONS OF THE MASTER'S TEXT

Oliver, when he went to find *Rosalind*, was "a wretched, ragged man o'ergrown with hair." Shakespeare's reason for making him bearded when he met the two girls in the forest is obvious. In the first place, he had been living a life of hardship in the forest since his banishment; in the second, it was essential that *Rosalind* and *Celia* should not recognize him immediately, as they would otherwise have done, seeing that he had been about the duke's court. Nevertheless, I have seen actors play *Oliver* clean-shaven, thus falsifying Shakespeare's description and ruining the realism of the scene.

Possibly these actors would have argued that as *Orlando* gave *Oliver* "fresh array and entertainment," he included a safety razor in the outfit, and so enabled him to shave. I speak seriously, for a player will often go to great extremes of absurdity to justify a perversion of the text.

Here is amusing instance of it. During the rehearsals of a great revival of "Twelfth Night," I chanced to meet one of the actors. He was a very short man, probably the shortest in the company. He had a copy of the play in his hand, and he told me he was on his way to rehearsal. As the cast had not been announced, I asked him what part he was going to play.

"*Sir Andrew Aguecheek*," he replied.

"But *Sir Andrew* was 'as tall as any man in Illyria,'" I said, quoting the knight's description of himself.

"Oh," replied the actor, "Shakespeare never meant that *Sir Andrew* is a very tall man. He is a boaster, who says he can do so many things that he does not do. What Shakespeare meant was that *Sir Andrew* is really a short man. That is the humor of it, don't you see?"

I confessed that I did not see.

The contrast between the tall, thin *Sir Andrew*, with his hair hanging about his face "like flax on a distaff," and the rotund *Sir Toby Belch* is in itself comic, and to ignore the physical difference between the two men throws away a point on which the author would have insisted.

"A GOOD PIECE OF BUSINESS"

In the banquet scene in "Macbeth," the great point in the psychological contrast between *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* is that she does not see the ghost of *Banquo*, which throws her husband into such a frenzy of fear, and she despises him as a seer of visions. In one performance, however, at the end of the scene, the actress who played *Lady Macbeth* looked round, cowered to the ground, and hid her eyes—used, in fact, every means she could think of to suggest that she saw the ghost.

This gave her the much-coveted center of the stage for the moment, and made her

share the situation with *Macbeth*. In fact, it wrested the situation from him. It was introduced, no doubt, because it was considered what actors call "a good piece of business." There is little or nothing which many actors will not sacrifice for the sake of "a good piece of business," if only they are of sufficient importance to get it introduced, no matter how diametrically opposed it may be to the spirit of the scene or the part they are playing.

I recall that in a production of "Henry VIII," in the great scene between *King Henry* and *Cardinal Wolsey*, the cardinal attempted to sit in the king's presence. In order to prevent him doing so, the actor playing *Henry* raised his leg and stuck it upon the sofa on which he sat. There was no mistaking the intention, for it was done deliberately, and with a look of triumph which said as plainly as the vernacular:

"Now, I've done you!"

That *Wolsey* was so little versed in the court etiquette of his day as to skirmish for a seat under such circumstances is as unthinkable as that *Henry*, a monarch impregnated with the majesty and dignity of kingcraft, would have resorted to any such vulgar method to circumvent his minister.

STRANGE WHIMS OF MODERN PRODUCERS

It is not only in "The Taming of the Shrew" that, at the whim of a character, the sun shines when it is night or the moon when it is day. I have more than once seen the same transformation occur at the whim of a producer.

Once, I recall it was in a magnificent scenic revival of "Romeo and Juliet." In the scene with the *Apothecary*, at the beginning of the fifth act, Shakespeare lays stress on the shop being shut because it is a holiday. In the production in question, the scene was played at night. After *Romeo* had knocked at the *Apothecary's* door, there was a pause; then a light appeared in one of the windows of the third story of the house, and, later, flashed through the windows of the lower stories, suggesting that the *Apothecary*, who appeared in a long dressing-gown, had been awakened from his sleep and was coming down-stairs in answer to the knock. Had the time been night, *Romeo* would not have had any reason to remark, "Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut," for it would have been the natural thing for him to find it closed. Moreover, *Romeo's* soliloquy recounting his dream clearly indicated that it was in the early part of the day, and not the night.

Similarly, in one production of "Hamlet," the scene at the king's court in the first act was played with lighted candles all about the stage. The result was that *Hamlet's* line, "Would the night were come!" became meaningless and absurd. In a subsequent chat with the actor of *Hamlet* I raised this point. He told me that what the producer meant the audience to understand was that the scene took place at an early hour of the night, and that what *Hamlet* called "the night" was midnight. As there was no clock on the stage to mark the hour, this idea did not get across the footlights.

Such subtleties as these, if they can be called by that name instead of the more correct one of stupidities, cannot be conveyed to an audience except in an inspired paragraph in a newspaper or by a note on the program. Neither of these is the place in which the actor's art or the producer's design should be exploited. The stage is the only place for them, and there they should be so plain and intelligible as to need no written explanation.

When Shakespeare wrote, there were no friendly newspapers in which he could get interviews or inspired paragraphs published; there were no programs on which he could print notes, and he had to content himself with his own statement of the facts he wanted his audience to know.

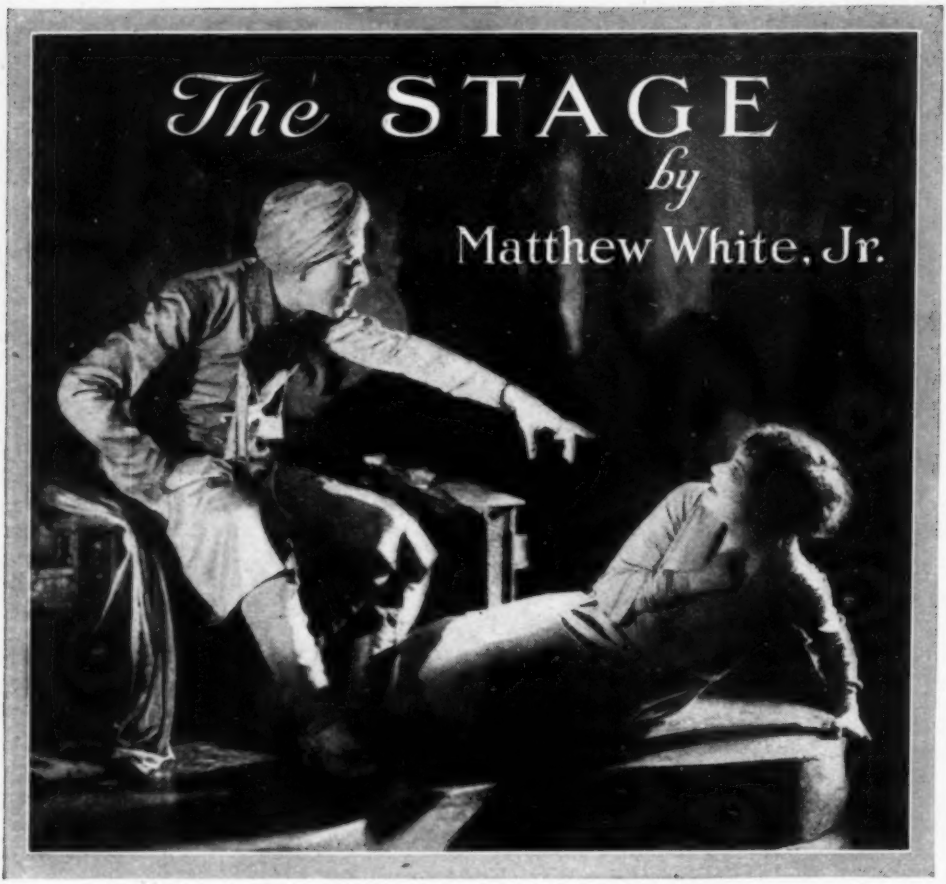
If the producers and players of to-day would faithfully study and follow these directions, they would avoid controversy and criticism, and would illuminate the master's text instead of falsifying it with ideas which, as I have shown, so often contravene Shakespeare's own words.

THE DREAM OF WOMAN

DEAR friend, there's little we can do
To make our dreams of man come true;
For my part, I have little care
While woman lets me dream of her.

Richard Leigh

The STAGE
by
Matthew White, Jr.



GEORGE ARLISS AND OLIVE WYNDHAM IN A SCENE FROM WILLIAM ARCHER'S VIVID PLAY OF ADVENTURE, "THE GREEN GODDESS"

From a photograph by Abbe, New York

A WRITER for the London *Stage*, in an article on the passing of the greenroom, echoes a plaint to which I long ago gave voice in this department, when he says:

> It is curious how all the old-time symbols of the fascination of the stage are going by the board. We have long ceased to speak affectionately of "the smell of the lamps," for the very good reason that it is ages since there were any lamps to smell. And it is possibly because one cannot pump up any enthusiasm for rows of odorless bulbs that the once sacred and beloved footlights are about to fall ready prey to the reformer.

On this side of the water, a week or two later, *Variety* printed a despatch from a Southern city to the effect that a department store was offering as a prize to its patrons an opportunity of going behind the scenes at one of the local theaters and observing the secrets of the back-stage region. A few of our managers have lamented the tendency to turn the world of make-believe inside out to make a readers' holiday, but this latest alliance with trade, to accomplish a similar purpose, would seem to be the final straw laid on the back of theatrical tradition.

The public is not to blame. It is the exploiter's fault. The people themselves, I maintain, would prefer to have the mysteries back of the curtain-line kept inviolate. They go to the theater mainly to forget. Why remind them, when they get there, that the drama is a business as well as an art by showing them how the thing is done. Stories of stage life have been a favorite topic with playwrights, but are so

seldom popular with audiences that the hit of "The Chorus Lady" stood forth as a shining mark for many moons. While "The Gold Diggers" deals with theatrical folk, none of its action takes place in the theater.

The present season is remarkable in that two plays with the back-stage region prominent in their traffic have appealed to the affections and the pocketbooks of the masses—"Rollo's Wild Oat," with its dash of "Hamlet," and "Dear Me," the selfish comedy which reached Broadway in mid-January after a year of prosperity on the road.

"Dear Me" promises to make a trio of the twin Golden successes in Manhattan, "Lightnin'" and "The First Year." It was written by Luther Reed, formerly of the New York *Herald* staff, and Hale Hamilton, who stars in it jointly with Grace La Rue. Its *motif* is of the sure-fire brand which the enemies thereof dub "hokum" and others label "Cinderellaish." The recipe would seem to be so simple that I wonder why almost all other producers appear quite content to allow John to reap all the Golden harvests.

The necessary directions may be briefly given thus:

Make your principal characters poor to start with.

Arrange to have something happen that shows the possibility of winning through to success by sticking to the straight and narrow.

Allow the difficulties in the way to be thrown there not by villains, but either by hypocrites or by persons of extremely narrow vision.

Stir thoroughly with laughter-inducing episodes.

End with success achieved against heavy odds, and with dress clothes all round.

Make sure that the concoction is served up on platters that are spotlessly clean.

In "Dear Me" there is a dash of novelty in the heroine's habit of writing letters to herself, which begin "Dear Me" and are signed "Myself." At the outset she is a poor slavey at a home for artistic and literary failures, and in default of friends who would correspond with her she takes this means of getting mail and of calling her own attention to faults in her disposition and demeanor which otherwise she might be inclined to overlook. However, she isn't any such priggish *Pollyanna* as one might imagine from the foregoing. When success smiles on her, she is human enough to let it affect her relationship to those who have stood by her in her poverty; so that the conflict in the rest of the story arises from her reaction to the new environment and her struggle with herself.

I hope, incidentally, that Eugene O'Neill will look in on the last scene of "Dear Me" and note what clever work these brand-new playwrights have done in showing what passes in a character's mind by pantomime alone. I can't forget what an opportunity to do something really big O'Neill missed in his handling of the transcendent idea that forms the basis of his "Emperor Jones."

Before leaving "Dear Me" I want to compliment Winchell Smith, who staged it, on the skilful fashion in which he introduces the incidental songs—music by John Golden, of "Poor Butterfly" fame, and words by Miss La Rue. They are incidental in the exact meaning of the term, and very charming into the bargain.

Lugged in by the scruff of the neck, on the other hand, seem to me to be the two prologues to "Wake Up, Jonathan," the new play with which Mrs. Fiske returned to New York after a couple of seasons on tour with her delightful "Mis' Nelly of N' Orleans." The new comedy was written by Hatcher Hughes, a lecturer on dramatic construction at Columbia University, and Elmer L. Rice, who when he was still called Reitzenstein, scored a knockout with his first play, "On Trial."

The first prologue to "Wake Up, Jonathan," is a fable enacted by marionettes, forecasting what the audience is to see later on. So doubtful, apparently, are its authors of their ability to make their meaning clear that they have found it necessary to print an explanatory note on the program setting forth just what the puppets are going to do. On top of this comes the prologue proper, devoid of any situation, and consisting of a long conversation, the gist of which might have been included in the painfully slow first act that follows. Indeed, the whole thing is hopelessly dull up to the entrance of *Jonathan,* a husband who has been away from his wife for ten years, and whose children have to be introduced to him. The *motif* of the piece centers about their choice between him and an out-at-elbows dreamer, a discarded suitor of their mother, who preferred pelf to

PEGGY BRADY, IN THE NEW ZIEGFELD NINE-O'CLOCK FROLIC ON THE ROOF ATOP THE NEW AMSTERDAM THEATER

From a photograph by Ayeda, New York

JEANNE EAGELS, LEADING WOMAN IN THE SPECTACULAR NAVAL PLAY, "IN THE NIGHT WATCH," AT THE CENTURY, NEW YORK'S MOST MAGNIFICENT THEATER

From her latest photograph by Alfred Cheney Johnston, New York

poetry. Of course, the kids incline toward the poet, who believes in Santa Claus, and the prodigal father's lot is made very unhappy by his wife and their offspring until his eleven-o'clock repentance sends the curtain down with a promise of a happy Christmas all around.

"Wake Up, Jonathan," is as untrue to life as can well be imagined. It caused one of its next-morning reviewers to see red as he headed his notice with the statement that "Mrs. Fiske ought to be ashamed of herself" for consenting to appear in what he declared was not a comedy, but "crude and violent burlesque." A fellow critic, however, found it "a rare little play, richly overlaid with sparkling wit." So there you are!

MADGE KENNEDY, STARRING IN PERSON IN A DUAL RÔLE IN "CORNERED," A MELODRAMA WHICH HAS CONFOUNDED THE CRITICS BY SUCCEEDING

From her latest photograph by the Old Masters Studio, New York

ELSIE MACKAY AS MARIE DUPLESSIS, LEADING WOMAN WITH LIONEL ATWILL IN DAVID BELASCO'S PRODUCTION OF "DEBURAU"

From her latest photograph by Muray, New York

For my part, I was frightfully bored for the first half of the evening, and pleasantly amused during the rest of it. One always had a sneaking suspicion, however, that the laughs were not honestly come by, but were forced by deliberate plants—in other words, by distortions of nature in order to point a playwright's joke.

I am not surprised that both Mrs. Fiske and her admirers are highly pleased with the piece. It affords her a wonderful opportunity to score off luckless Charles Dalton, who plays opposite her. But a wide gap yawns between such a cheap-John device to pick up laughs and the entertainment I saw the next night—"The Green Goddess," starring George Arliss in the best vehicle he has had since "Disraeli."

URSULA O'HARE, WHO IS ROSALIE WITH FRED STONE IN "TIP-TOP," THE BIGGEST OF ALL HIS BIG SUCCESSES

From a photograph by Schwarz, New York

HAZEL DAWN, LEADING WOMAN IN "UP IN THE HAYMOW," THE NEW WOODS FARCE BY WILSON COLLISON AND AVERY HOPWOOD

From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York

Besides giving its audiences pleasure and affording Arliss ample atonement for his recent misadventure with "Poldekin," "The Green Goddess," by William Archer, does much more. It effectually punctures the wide-spread belief that no critic can ever write a well-made play.

Archer, who was born in Perth, Scotland, and is now sixty-four years old, is more distinguished as the author of "Play-Making," published in 1912, than as the first man to translate the dramas of Ibsen into English. For a number of years he reviewed plays for weekly periodicals in London, but his specialty has been telling others how to write them. For such a man to turn out a success himself is a noteworthy feat. Moreover, this first offering of his is miles from being the highbrow concoction one would naturally expect from an authority on dramatic construction. "The Green Goddess" is an out-and-out melodrama, abounding in thrills, but so skilfully built that it deserves to have an adjective inserted in its classification, and to be billed as a "play of high adventure." No pun intended, either, with reference to the airplanes that figure so largely in the action of the piece.

The scene is laid in an imaginary principality of Central Asia, where a party of three aeronauts—two men and a woman—are dropped when their engine goes dead. George Arliss is the raja in whose power fate has thus placed them—the suave, English-educated ruler of a barbarous people, three of whom have just been condemned to death by the British government for insurrection in India. The raja applies the Mosaic principle of an eye for an eye to his captives, to whom, in the three days of life still remaining to them, he extends his hospitality, including champagne with their dinners and billiards to while away the time of waiting for the execution. To the woman, of course, he offers the alternative of becoming the most favored member of his harem. To her indignant answer that she prefers death, which will reunite her with her loved ones in heaven, the raja retorts that even God himself cannot give her back her children's childhood.

Arliss has a rôle which must be dear to his heart. For once a part that an actor loves to play and a part that the public loves to watch are lodged in the same character.

Archer says that he based the piece on a dream he had in the autumn of 1919. He decided to use the idea in a melodrama which he had long contemplated writing for H. B. Irving. The second act was finished first, and then Mr. Irving died; but fortunately Archer went on and completed the play, which the fiasco of "Poldekin" permitted to fall into the hands of the man of all men to act it.

In view of its smashing success, it is interesting to note that Archer once asked Bernard Shaw to collaborate upon it with him, and as a specimen of the thing sent him a draft of the big scene in the second act. The famous Irishman's comment was that it might make a good movie, but pictures didn't interest him. Pinero likewise turned down a chance to get in on the work.

I wonder, by the bye, if Pinero has ever seen the mess the picture folk have made of his "Iris." Under the title "The Slave of Vanity," and with Pauline Frederick as the star, it has been distorted for the screen to fit the theory that cinema fans desire only happy endings. Most of the story which Virginia Harned, William Courtenay, and Oscar Asche made so powerful a drama about twenty years ago now becomes a dream, from which the heroine awakes at the close of the fifth reel with the resolve to accept life in a log cabin with the man she loves.

This dream stuff has become a perfect obsession with the film people. On the same night when I saw the mangled "Iris," there were two other dreams on the program, and a week later I counted two in the same bill, one of which, "Whispering Devils," appears to be none other than "Michael and his Lost Angel," the play about a clergyman by Henry Arthur Jones.

A dream in pictures that seems really justified is the Fox filming of Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court." Indeed, it seems to me that here is an actual improvement on the book—which is also bettered by the introduction of automobiles and motor-cycles, devices unknown in 1888, when the story was written.

Martin Cavendish, heir to millions, falls in love, but is already engaged to marry *Lady Grey Gordon,* his mother's choice. Wondering how the knights of olden days would have got out of such an entanglement, he sits up late reading, when a burglar enters the library. *Martin* wrestles

MARJORIE GATESON, LEADING WOMAN IN "THE ROSE GIRL," AT THE SHUBERTS' LATEST THEATER, THE AMBASSADOR, THE FIRST OF THE MANY NEW HOUSES TO THROW OPEN THEIR DOORS IN 1921

From her latest photograph by Schwarz, New York

MABEL NORMAND, WHOSE CURRENT PICTURE IS "WHAT HAPPENED TO ROSA"

From a photograph by Mishkin, New York

with the intruder, but is finally stricken down unconscious, and lies on the floor, with an ancient spear menacing his breast-bone. This scene fades into the year 528, with *Sagramore's* spear planted in the dress-suit-clad figure of the Yankee lying on the sward just outside King Arthur's castle. Then follows the episode of the eclipse, as in the book, and thence the picture proceeds in a snappy vein of humor to the finish.

The names of the players are practically all new to me, save that of Karl Formes, who appears briefly as Mark Twain; but they are all skilfully chosen, with Harry C. Myers as the Yankee and William V. Mong particularly happy as the envious magician, *Merlin*. Here is a picture with action galore, comedy aplenty, and a sumptuous production quite justified by the subject.

In the way of mounting, I want to praise the Shuberts for the unstinted completeness with which they produced "In the Night Watch," following "Mecca" at the Century in late January. Adapted from the French by Michael Morton, "In the Night Watch" is without literary value, but contains several exceedingly tense situations and two or three stage pictures of unusual effectiveness. Among them are a dance on deck aboard a battle-ship on August 1, 1914, in the harbor of Toulon, and the subsequent torpedoing of the same vessel, followed by a trial before a French naval court. A star cast lends polish to this maritime melodrama, quite in the fashion of the old Academy of Music days, when "The Sporting Duchess" enlisted the services of the best actors in town.

IRENE WILLIAMS, WHO SINGS THE TITLE-RÔLE IN THE SUMPTUOUS REVIVAL OF "ERMINIE" WITH FRANCIS WILSON AND DE WOLF HOPPER AS STARS

From a photograph by White, New York

The selection of Robert Warwick for the hero of a war play was quite an appropriate one, for he spent two years with the A. E. F. in France, entering the service as a captain and coming out as a major. Maclyn Arbuckle, Cyril Scott, Margaret Dale, Max Figman, and Edmund Lowe are other well-known names on the roster of "In the Night Watch," in addition to that of Jeanne Eagels as leading woman.

After being seen here last season in "The Wonderful Thing," Miss Eagels went abroad and announced her retirement, but was persuaded to reconsider her intention —happily for playgoers, especially for those who go to the Century, whose vast spaces call for far-reaching voices on the stage. Miss Eagels possesses tones of such resonant and musical timbre that it is a delight to listen to her. She comes of Spanish-Irish parentage, and was born in Boston. At the age of seven she began her

HELEN HOLT, WITH MRS. FISKE AS THE DAUGHTER IN "WAKE UP, JONATHAN!"

From a photograph by White, New York

career as *Puck* in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and during the last few years she has been leading woman with Arliss in "Hamilton" and in the Belasco production of "Daddies."

Another actress just now in town and gifted with a noteworthy speaking voice is Clara Joel, starring with Willard Mack in the latter's romantic drama, "Near Santa Barbara," previously known as "Poker Ranch." Probably its original name was dropped for the good and sufficient reason that there is no card-play on the stage from the rise of the first curtain until the fall of the fourth, albeit the whole *motif* of the piece hinges on a gambling debt. After a slow first half-hour the action quickens, and the end of the evening is reached in a whirl of excitement, induced by the constant shifting of suspicion from one to an-

CLAIRE NAGLE (MRS. ARTHUR HAMMERSTEIN), WHO HAS RETURNED TO THE STAGE TO TAKE THE PRIMA DONNA RÔLE WITH FRANK TINNEY IN "TICKLE ME"

From a photograph by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York

other of the *dramatis personæ* on the way to the final disclosure as to which of five persons fired the shot that killed a sixth.

Two Mexicans and a Japanese are prominent in the traffic of the piece, supplying a variety of types that would make it of service to Gay MacLaren, the young woman impersonator from Dakota, who gives an entire play without any other aid than her marvelous memory. I heard her do "Bought and Paid For," and she is so clever at it that I can think of no better substitute for the real thing in places where the high cost of travel makes the screen the only form of drama available.

Oscar Wilde, I should say, would fare better at the hands of Miss MacLaren than is usually his fate in the films. This reminds me that I recently saw Wilde's cleverest play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," acted in New York's smallest theater, the Bramhall. Belief persists that Butler Davenport — who runs it — must be a public-spirited millionaire; but he isn't, and his ability to maintain his playhouse remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the metropolis. I like his acting better than I like the plays he writes. Now that he has departed from his former custom of doing only his own works, it is on the cards that he may some day light on a smashing hit that will send all Manhattan to East Twenty-Seventh Street and justify the enlargement of his unique little theater—which he avers is to take place during the coming summer.

Reverting to the subject of one-woman-power entertainers, a thoroughly enjoyable hour and a half is provided by Ruth Draper with her original monologues, in the manner of Beatrice Herford, but wholly different in the matter of them. From the fashionable French dressmaker, all smiles for the customer and snarling asides for her work-people, to the lunch-counter girl at the railroad-station on the Western plains, Miss Draper demonstrates her ability to be equally at home in comedy or in pathos, while her picture of an Englishwoman showing her garden to a visitor is a real gem. I am not surprised at the success this clever American girl achieved with her recitals in London, so wide is the variety of her subjects, and so skilfully does she "put them over."

Speaking of American girls, not long ago I said to a well-known singer who, beginning with light opera on this side, made a name for herself as a prima donna in Europe before the war:

"When are we going to hear you at the Metropolitan?"

Her reply was a shrug of the shoulders and the simple sentence:

"I am an American."

The implied charge against the present régime at the New York temple of grand opera is unjustified. It is enough to mention Geraldine Farrar, Mabel Garrison, Florence Easton, and Rosa Ponselle. The other night I heard Cora Chase, from Haverhill, Massachusetts, make her début as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto," with the American, Charles Hackett, as the *Duke of Mantua*. Miss Chase brought the equipment of abounding youth, a slender figure —perhaps a trifle tall to pair off with the average tenor — and a voice marvelously clear and well under control, allowing for the unavoidable nervousness incidental to a first appearance in what is now the world's foremost opera-house.

The Metropolitan, by the way, despite the unfortunate illness of Caruso, is enjoying a highly prosperous season. Practically every seat in the huge auditorium is occupied at each performance, although seven dollars, with seventy cents additional for the war tax, is the price even unto the back row of the orchestra.

While on the subject of American things of which we may be proud, I am glad to mention a new offering by a clever American playwright to which I can assign the praise I was forced to deny him for his "Emperor Jones." In "Diff'rent" Eugene O'Neill has written a daring study of a woman in a New England seaport, who refuses to marry a man two days before the wedding because she learns that he has had an affair with a native woman in the South Seas. Thirty years elapse between the two acts, and then we find her still single, with *Caleb* still waiting for her. Meantime she has lost her heart to his young nephew, *Benny*. *Benny* is back from the war, and mercenarily trades on the old maid's fondness for him. He even offers to marry her, until he bethinks him that his uncle might give him more money to leave her unwedded. The piece is bitterly unpleasant, but as a reflex of life with every element of the possible therein, I must acclaim it as a tragic picture worthy to hang beside "Beyond the Horizon."

The Odd Measure

The Decadence of the Dance

The Gloomy Rite That Threatens to Eclipse the Gaiety of France

THE French used to twit the Anglo-Saxon with "taking his pleasures sadly," but a recent item of social news from Paris makes one fear that the proverbial Gallic gaiety is becoming a serious business too. The old *café chantant* of Montmartre is not what it was before the war, or rather its patrons are not what they were; and the places where wits and artists and poets were wont to gather together to talk inspired shop, exchange whims and dreams, and pronounce the last word on all things under heaven, are well-nigh deserted. The *esprit Gaulois* that made the laughing Frenchman one of the most desirable citizens of our planet seems to be under eclipse—more than that, of course, it cannot be.

The change would seem to have little to do with war melancholy, or with anxiety about "reparations." Its chief cause, apparently, is the modern dancing-master. All the energy that once manifested itself in so many varieties of carnivalesque gaiety has been absorbed by a positively owlish cult of the dance.

The French dances of to-day are not the "naughty" frolics of merrier, madder days, not such ebullience of animal spirits as found expression in the cancan of the Moulin Rouge or the Bal Bullier. Strange as it may sound to prudish ears, the very vitality of such dances gave them a comparative innocence. Gusto, even though it may offend the proprieties, always brings with it a certain saving grace. The modern dance by which not only Paris but the whole so-called civilized world has been gloomily hypnotized is a very different affair. Its resemblance to dancing as usually understood is slight indeed. Rather it seems to be the deadly serious exercise of some dark ritual of unmentionable gods.

Its typical masculine performer is a peculiarly disagreeable young man, with narrow shoulders and "smatted" hair, somber in temper, and autocratic toward his flower-like but tranced and joyless partner. Such meaning as it has is certainly not subtle, though it is wearily and wearisomely evil in its suggestiveness. It is more like a pathological symptom than a dance, and recalls similar dancing epidemics of the Middle Ages, which called for the bell, book, and candle of the ecclesiastical exorcist. Its mathematical formality, however, has nothing of the courtly formalism of the stately dances of old time, with their suggestions of chivalry, of manly gallantry, and of the high-bred coquetry of great ladies. Nor was it so they used to dance on the bridge at Avignon, or to foot the morris in merry England. Even the *danse macabre* is cheerful, compared with this spiritless jerking of marionettes. It gruesomely reminds one of that ghastly dance Oscar Wilde describes as seen in silhouette on the window-blinds of a haunted house:

> Sometimes a clockwork puppet pressed
> A fantom lover to her breast;
> Sometimes they seemed to try to sing.
> Sometimes a horrible marionette
> Came out, and smoked its cigarette
> Upon the steps like a live thing.
> Then, turning to my love, I said:
> "The dead are dancing with the dead,
> The dust is whirling with the dust!"

A rather lurid side-light is thrown on this epileptic modern dance by the statement, which may or may not be news to the patrons of certain

dance-halls in America, to the effect that the narrow-shouldered young man who is the spoiled darling of the mysterious rites frequently refuses to dance with his partner until she has checked her corsets in the cloak-room!

* * * * *

Another Frontier Difficulty

France and Switzerland at Odds Over the "Free Zones"

WE learned a lot of geography during the war, and the peace treaties taught us all about such places as Silesia, Teschen, the Saar, Malmedy, and Yap; but what do we know about Gex? Yet there it is, in the four hundred and thirty-fifth article of the Versailles treaty, and France and Switzerland are disputing over it:

> The high contracting parties agree that the stipulations of the treaties of 1815 and of other supplementary acts concerning the free zones of Upper Savoy and the Gex district are no longer consistent with present conditions, and that it is for France and Switzerland to come to an agreement together, with a view of settling between themselves the status of these territories under such conditions as shall be considered suitable by both countries.

The Swiss Federal Council accepted this article with reservations, but France is unwilling to admit the reservations. The "free zones" mentioned in it are small portions of French territory situated in the departments of Ain and Haute Savoie, and adjoining the canton of Geneva, into which Swiss products are at present imported free of duty. At these points the French custom-houses, instead of being on the political frontier between France and Switzerland, are moved back to the boundary between the free zones and the rest of France. There are three different zones, with a total area of a little more than two hundred square miles—the zone of 1815, consisting of the Pays de Gex; the little Sardinian zone of 1816; and the annexation zone of 1860.

At the Congress of Vienna, the Swiss representative tried to obtain the annexation of the Pays de Gex to the canton of Geneva. He failed, but France was obliged to make Gex a free zone. The little Sardinian zone was created by the treaty of Turin, in 1816, as part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, and passed to France in 1860, with Haute Savoie, in payment for Napoleon III's aid in driving the Austrians out of Lombardy. At the same time the annexation zone was created by Napoleon as a concession to the inhabitants of Chablais, Faucigny, and St. Julien, who consented to union with France only on condition of fiscal freedom. So close are the relations between Geneva and these frontier districts that seven hundred inhabitants of the latter own land in Geneva and more than five hundred inhabitants of Geneva own land in the zones. The absurdity of the situation is apparent when one remembers that one has to carry a passport across the frontier, and that most of these people have to cross daily to go to their work.

It is reported from Geneva that since agreement has been found impossible, France may force matters to a head by moving her custom-houses to the political frontier.

* * * * *

A Bargain in Archduchesses

A "Charming" One Would Marry a Rich and Refined American

IF the ghost of Voltaire ever plays truant o' nights from the gloomy vaults of the Pantheon, where he and Rousseau lie coffined side by side, he must find much malign satisfaction for his sinister humor in the present farcical-tragical plight of what used to be called the "hupper classes" in certain parts of Europe. With the still unforgetable smart of the staves wielded by the lackeys of the Duc de Richelieu on his shadowy shoulders, he must have read with peculiar glee the recent advertisement in an Austrian newspaper of a "charming archduchess, accomplished musician, with knowledge of several languages, brought up in luxury and now tired of a miserable existence without money," who "would marry rich and refined American or English gentleman about thirty-eight years old—parvenus and individuals of other nationalities need not apply."

The author of "Candide," it will be recalled, once assembled six discrowned heads at a table d'hôte in Venice. That has long amused the world as one of his sardonic jests, but Switzerland to-day gives it the dignity of a prophesy many times fulfilled. Switzerland, indeed, is a bargain-counter for the fallen divinities of mid-European aristocracy; and the "charming archduchess," we are told, is by no means alone with her empty purse and her battered escutcheon. Time was, doubtless, when she, like the sister of *Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh*, would shudder at the thought of mating with a man whose boast of heraldry went no further than "seventy-one quarterings." Now any "rich and refined American" will be thankfully received, with no questions asked as to his armorial bearings. "We are getting on," as Mr. Asquith said on a memorable occasion.

And yet there is no need to point the facile sneer at this noble lady in distress; nor need we assume that she, and other nobilities similarly down on their luck, will go a begging. Really old distinctions die hard, and with good reason. It will be a long while before their glamour is replaced by homespun, democratic orders of merit. Should the "charming archduchess" succeed in striking a bargain with some "rich and refined American or English gentleman," it does not necessarily follow that he would have the worst of the bargain. It is not only to-day or yesterday that the transfer of European coronets for a consideration of American dollars has seemed to some of the best American families that fair exchange which is proverbially no robbery. It has been a recognized feature of the eternal marriage-market for several decades; and we may be sure that no American would make such a bargain were he not satisfied of the value received.

Not all European titles, by any means, are represented by aristocratic cads or adventuresses. Indeed, the value of old blood is confirmed by natural law. Americans themselves—of the Brahmin class, as Holmes called them—are by no means indifferent to their own ancestry—which, of course, is European, too. The "charming archduchess" may be a bargain, after all. But would she advertise, if she were really so "charming"? Aye, there's the rub!

* * * * *

The War of the Overland Trails

The Profits of Tourist Traffic Are Well Worth Fighting For

HIGHWAYS are competing with one another for the favor of the traveling public. It is not a new phenomenon, though it has novel aspects. The most famous war of the trails was between the northern and southern routes to California. The noted pony express was established, not for profit, but to proclaim the speediness of the road from St. Joseph, Missouri, to San Francisco, as distinguished from the Santa Fé Trail route. That same good-natured but active rivalry continues to this day between the Lincoln Highway, which passes through Omaha, Cheyenne, and Salt Lake City, and the southern automobile route by way of Santa Fé.

The millions who are seeing America first in automobiles carry great sums, perhaps as much as three hundred million dollars annually, to spend for gasoline, oil, foodstuffs, souvenirs, and repairs. Some communities prosper greatly from the tourist trade. The local business men seek to attract and develop it; they improve their roads; they organize with other towns to lay out and advertise a trail for scores, hundreds, even thousands of miles across country. Local traffic increases, through traffic comes by, everybody spending money.

The Red Ball route drives southward all the way from St. Paul to New Orleans, crossing a score of ambitious east and west trails. The Cannonball comes in by one roadway, the State Fair by another, and if one city plans ten miles of concrete, a rival projects fifteen miles. Both beseech the Legislatures and the Federal government for larger appropriations.

For years the country was shaken and convulsed by the wars of the railroads. They were private enterprises in what is to a great extent a

public business. Now the public itself, for the public's benefit, with incidental private profits in trade and entertainment and advertisement, is pitting highway against highway for the tourist traffic of America.

* * * * *

The Lure of Adventure

That, and Not the Lust for Gold, Conquered Our Wildernesses

SOME cold-blooded mathematician has proved to his own satisfaction that if the adventurers who went seeking gold in the great rushes to California, Montana, and Alaska had settled down on the old home farm or city lot, and worked for crops or wages, they would have added vastly more to their own and the national wealth than ever was added by their efforts to the world's store of gold.

Other wise men have declared that if the thousands of men who rushed across the fertile acres of the Mississippi bottoms to wrestle with alkali, sage, mesquite roots, and the unclouded sunshine of the Far West, had intensely farmed the near slopes of the Atlantic watershed, they might have converted its valleys into gardens and orchards, have harnessed its streams, and greatly multiplied the products and manufactures of the United States.

If any one thing acquits the American people of avarice and sordid ambitions, it is the fact that they have listened to the bells of their dreams, and have turned their back upon the sure things at hand to adventure their savings, their time, their efforts, and their very lives, to brave the wilderness in its glory and tame the savage wilds.

They did not go for wealth. They went to see the world, to confront dangers, to enjoy hardships, and to endure men's trials. Men abandoned inheritances, they left businesses, they gave away farms, they stripped themselves of their burdens of property, to hit the Overland and Santa Fé Trails. Gold was but the excuse for their going; it was the sop they offered to the practicalists. In their hearts was lust for strain and struggle, for peril and excitement; and these they found.

* * * * *

The End of a Romantic Career

"Jacob of Simla" Was Kipling's Lurgan Sahib and Marion Crawford's Mr. Isaacs

THE strange career of A. M. Jacob, widely known in India as "Jacob of Simla," ended recently at Bombay, where he died almost blind, virtually a pauper, and a thoroughly disappointed man. He was the hero of Marion Crawford's first novel, "Mr. Isaacs," and in "Kim" he figures as *Lurgan Sahib*, who taught *Kim* the lore of the East.

As a boy, Jacob was sold as a slave in Constantinople to a Turkish pasha who was kind to him and taught him the literature and history of the Orient. Penniless and friendless, on the death of his master, he set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and eventually made his way to Bombay. There he met a nobleman from Haiderabad, in whose household he secured employment as an Arabic scribe. Jacob is understood to have been a Jew, but he did not profess the Hebrew faith. From Haiderabad he set out for Delhi with his small savings, and set up as a dealer in precious stones, with such success that in a few years he became the possessor of a great fortune and a friend of the highest Anglo-Indian officials. His home at Simla was one of the most wonderful in India, as Kipling describes it, but Jacob's asceticism was perhaps the most wonderful thing in it. He never drank liquor, never smoked, never ate meat.

At the height of his success, a precious stone brought his downfall. Early in 1890 Jacob heard that in England there was an extremely valuable diamond for sale. Believing that the Nizam of Haiderabad would like to purchase it, Jacob went to him and asked him how much he would give for it.

"Forty-six lacs of rupees," said the prince, one of the richest native rulers in India.

Forty-six lacs of rupees are approximately fifteen hundred thousand dollars. Jacob agreed to get the diamond, and foresaw a good margin of

profit. He went to England, bought the stone for about half the price offered by the prince, and returned to claim his fee.

Meanwhile, the prime minister of Haiderabad, who loved not Jacob, heard of the Nizam's extravagance, and put the facts before the British resident, Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, who stopped the sale as being contrary to public interest. The Nizam had, however, already paid twenty-three lacs of rupees on account. Jacob was not greatly out of pocket on the transaction, but the vengeance of the prime minister followed him. Charges of trying to obtain money by false pretenses were brought against the diamond merchant in the Nizam's name. The trial took place in Calcutta; it lasted fifty-seven days, and each day of the trial is said to have cost Jacob one lac of rupees in lawyers' fees. He won the case, but was almost a ruined man.

He then offered the diamond to the Nizam for seventeen lacs of rupees, and the offer was accepted; but though the prince got the stone, Jacob never got the money, and all his efforts to collect it in the courts were frustrated.

* * * * *

Old London Street Cries and Songs

The Melodious Advertisements of a Bygone Day

THE revival of Gay's "Beggars' Opera," with its wealth of old folk melody and topical allusion, calls attention to the street cries and tradesmen's songs, so common in olden times, before the advertisement on the printed page practically silenced them. Many of them were full of musical beauty, for the vendors crying their wares used quaint little traditional tunes.

Some of those used in London have been unearthed by Sir Frederick Bridge, for many years organist at Westminster Abbey, from compositions more than a century older than Gay's curious old opera, which was produced in 1728. They give interesting pictures of town life as it was then lived. In the collection are different cries for eighteen kinds of fruit, six kinds of liquors, and eleven kinds of vegetables; four begging songs, one town-crier's song, and five watchmen's songs. A broom-seller's song goes back to 1584. It ran:

> Have you any boots, maids, or have you any shoon,
> Or an old pair of buskins? Will you buy a broom?

Day began in London with the watchman's cry, "God give you good morrow, my masters! Past three o'clock and a fair morning!" and ended with his warning at night:

> Lanthorns and candle-light hang out, maids!
> Twelve o'clock—look well to your lock,
> Your fire and your light; and so, good night!

In between came the song of the sweep:

> The chimney sweeper, all the long day
> He singeth and sweepeth the soot away.

The song of the traveling dentist shows that he was something of a humorist:

> Touch and go, touch and go!
> Ha' ye any work for Kind Heart, the tooth-drawer?
> Touch and go!

The rat-catcher made his calling as pleasant as possible by singing:

> Ha' ye any rats, mice, polecats, weasels?
> Ha' ye an old sow that hath the measles?

As opera-goers know, many of the street cries of Paris have been preserved in Charpentier's "Louise." Perhaps some one will recover for us those of the early settlers of Boston, New Amsterdam, and Philadelphia.

Light Verse

THE WAY TO WIN

LIFE is just a game to play;
  Play it!
When you have a thing to say,
  Say it!
Do not stammer "if" or "but";
Courage takes the shortest cut.
When your task is hard to do,
Grit your teeth and see it through!

Life is just a prize to get;
  Get it!
If the stage is not well set,
  Set it!
Men of mettle seldom find
What they're looking for behind.
Fate is passing down the street;
Follow him on nimble feet!

Elias Lieberman

THE PROFITEER

BAA, baa, black sheep,
  Have you any dough?
Sure I have a plenty,
  As you ought to know!
Some I pilfered from the rich,
  Of some I robbed the poor,
And some I stole from you, my friend—
  Of that you may be sure!

N. C. Wood

BALLADE OF READING TRASHY LITERATURE

OH,.sad-eyed man who yonder sits,
  Face in a book from morn till night—
Who, though the world should go to bits,
  Pores on right through the waning light—
  Oh, is it sorrow or delight
That holds you, though the sun has set?
  "I read," he said, "what these fools write,
Not to remember, but forget.

"Man drinks or gambles, woman knits,
  To put their sorrow out of sight;
From folly unto folly flits
  The weary mind, or wrong or right.
  My melancholy taketh flight,
Reading the worst books I can get;
  The worst, yet best—such is my plight—
Not to remember, but forget.

"'Tis not alone the immortal wits,
  The lords of language, pens of might,
Past masters of the word that fits
  In their mosaic true and bright,
  That aid us in our mortal fight
And heal us of our wild regret,
  But books that humbler pens indite,
Not to remember, but forget.

ENVOI

"Oh, prince, 'tis but the neophyte
  Who scorns this humble novelette
You watch me reading, uncontrite—
  Not to remember, but forget!"

Richard Le Gallienne

A RUMOR—UNCONFIRMED

I SENSED the change, the manner strange,
  Of Ann Eliza, modern maid;
From frank and bold to shy and cold
  Some hidden motive Ann had swayed.
    The new Ann was freezing!
She wouldn't flirt, a lengthy skirt
  Around her ankles neat she drew;
A ruff was where her throat, once bare,
  Had reared its loveliness to view;
    The old Ann was pleasing.

I took her hand and sought to band
  Her waist, as oft I had before;
She dropped her eyes in feigned surprise,
  And bade me never do so more.
    I couldn't believe it!
A worm aghast, I turned, at last,
  And asked the why, and what, and when.
She tucked her head and shyly said:
  "The modest girl's in style again."
    I cannot conceive it!

Terrell Love Holliday

ANOTHER INDIAN ATROCITY

A STRANGE and awful tale I tell
  Of a dire and bloody deed,
As told to me by Batty Lee,
  A dentist up in Creede.

It seems an Injun from the Ridge
  Strolled into Batty's store;
He rubbed his jaw and spilled some waw,
  And rubbed his jaw some more.

In vain did Batty question him
About his ache or pain;
He poked the chair and silverware,
And rubbed his jaw again.

At last, despairing, Batty placed
The victim in a chair;
Then got to work and pulled a tooth
Which seemed to need repair.

The yell that heathen busted loose
Still echoes through the halls;
It shook a sparrow off the roof,
And cracked the plastered walls.

Then like a flash he gained his feet,
Made Batty kiss the floor,
And, spilling blood and yells and mud,
Fled swiftly through the door.

An hour elapsed; then suddenly
A feathered chief stalked in.
His face was stern, but seemed to yearn
To muster up a grin.

"Him Painted Dog," the chief remarked.
"Him see them pretty chair;
Him see them tool; him heap big fool;
Him make mistake for fair!"

Then, trying hard to choke a laugh,
He said in manner grave:
"That boy, him think this barber-shop;
By damn, him want a shave!"

Earl H. Emmons

BARREL-ORGANS

I KNOW the barrel-organ's tune
Is not the music one should praise,
And yet I love to hear it croon
The melodies of earlier days
Before that upstart, jazz, was king,
And men were not ashamed to sing:
"Shall I, Wasting in Despair?"
And "There's Music in the Air."

Ears may resent the whine and wheeze,
The tempo jerky like the crank;
But hearts, while there are hearts to please,
Will number old ones that will thank
The stars that something deigns to play
The music of that far-off day
When from Kimberley to Nome
All the world sang, "Home, Sweet Home!"

Richard Butler Glaenzer

ALL KINDS

I LIKE the man who smiles when smiles are right;
Whose soul is fearless and whose heart is white;
Who dares to use his spirit's soaring wings,
Nor grumbles when he stubs his toes on things.
And yet I sort of like the helpless one
Who falls, and weeps, and thinks his day is done!
I honor him who looks you in the eyes,
Nor ever makes pretense at being wise;
Who takes the hardest knock without a qualm;
And, when his fellows rage, meets ire with calm.
And yet I like the poor, explosive fool
Who never learns the knack of keeping cool!

I like the chap who's keen and humorous—
Looks coolly on, and never makes a fuss;
Who builds his life on a foundation sure,
And learns in silence nobly to endure.
I like a *man*, dog-gone it! So do you!
But then I sort of like a weakling, too!

G. G. Bostwick

A MAN'S WAY

MAUD does not mind my Turkish cigarettes,
For she, too, smokes;
Claire joins with gusto in my loud ha-ha's—
She likes my jokes!
My ashes thickly cover fair Maud's floor,
And after telling Claire a few she'll roar;
But Mary always finds my puns a bore,
And when I drop a match or two she's sore;
So, after all, it's Mary I adore!

I get along with Constance when I dance—
She knows my style;
When Virgie listens to me as I sing,
She dreams a while;
My dancing is esthetic, Connie knows;
Virginia says my voice is *quelquechose;*
But Mary says I step upon her toes,
And when I hum she goes off in a doze;
So, manlike, it's to Mary I'll propose!

S. Marchant Phillips

THE BUGLE SONG OF BUSINESS

(With apologies to Tennyson)

THE price now falls on pop-corn balls,
On prunes and pork chops, old in story;
The market breaks on garden rakes,
And war-time profits slide to glory.
Buy, public, buy! Keep the round dollars cruising!
Buy, public! Answer, merchant, "Losing, losing, losing!"

Oh, hark! Oh, hear! The fatted steer
Is cheaper, cheaper, cheaper growing;
While price of oats, wheat, corn, and shoats
On downward chute is headlong going.
Sell, farmer, sell! Let's give our bills a dusting!
Sell, farmer! Answer, banker, "Busting, busting, busting!"

Oh, neighbor, why should you and I
Put all our cash and crops in hiding?
Why should we roll into a hole
The coin that should be kept a sliding?
Buy, consumer, buy! Keep the winged dollars flying!
Sell, consumer! Answer, credit, "Dying, dying, dying!"

J. E. Tufft

Underground Law

BY DOROTHY BRODHEAD

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

SERGEANT JIM JASPER, of the State constabulary, was watching the Muskrat Coal-Mine pay its men. He was sitting quietly astride his motionless horse, at the farther corner of the breaker. He was well out of the direct vision of the coal-grimed multitude that filed one by one past the window of the pay-car; but he could see clearly every individual who presented himself to be paid. He was watching for a certain man, and he did not establish his post of observation nearer the pay-line because he did not want that man to see him first.

He had need of this caution, because he was single-handed. For most purposes, the mounted State police of the coal-fields travel in pairs. "Getting" Satterlee might easily develop into a two-man job; but Yeates, who had been assigned to it with Jasper, had been stricken ill only three miles out from the barracks and forced to turn back.

From time to time, Jasper let his glance stray down the length of that long waiting line to where the end was not yet in sight. He was beginning to suspect that the man he was waiting for, although due to be paid, was not going to appear. It might be expected of Sharp Satterlee. Twice before he had been taken by the constabulary, and many times by the regular police.

Jasper remembered the night they took the man's finger-prints, in the little dark room in the basement of the constabulary barracks, on the occasion of his last capture—the finger-prints that now fastened upon him undeniably the guilt of this, the most recent and the most vicious of his crimes.

Jasper's eyes narrowed upon that crawling human line. There was the end of it in view at last. His restless glance passed out along its length, passed and repassed with increasing irritation. No figure in it in any way resembled Satterlee.

If Satterlee failed to come, it would mean that he had eluded the constabulary for the third time in their efforts to seize him for this offense. Jasper hated failure, either for himself or for his band. It had been acknowledged that the presence of the mounted State police checked many crimes among the more ignorant element of the coal-fields before they were committed; and Jasper fumed at anything that threatened that reputation. He was proud of the organization to which he belonged, proud of the noted nerve and fearlessness of the State's riders.

Pride in whatever he undertook and carried through—that was his mother in him. Sometimes it would seem that all men fall into one of two classes—those who have had good mothers and those who have not. There were other legacies which had come to him from Charmion, his mother. One was her beauty—which, being a man, he hated.

From his father he refused to inherit. Since one unthinkable night, he had relentlessly rooted out of his being everything that reminded him of Jim Jasper the first. There was one inheritance, however, which lay outside his power to eradicate—his powerful stature, the symbol of that unspeakable thing for which he hated his father the worst.

His hands lay loosely now, holding the reins on his horse's neck, while his eyes, becoming more and more certain of disappointment, occasionally swept the culm-stained landscape in the faint hope of seeing Satterlee hurrying from some quarter to join the end of that line. But they only encountered the figure of a girl just coming into sight around the opposite corner of the breaker—a girl who stood no chance of becoming confused with the huddled, unkempt females waiting, like vultures, along the pay-line, determined not to fail in obtaining a share of their men's pay.

Jasper knew the girl. Some of the grimness dropped out of his face. She recognized him, too, and waved with the frank, gay friendliness of comradeship.

But he did not stir to meet her. He continued to sit his horse, aggressively ready for any emergency connected with his business there.

She came alongside and smiled up at him, squinting a little at the brightness of the sun.

"How do you come to be here to-day?" she questioned informally.

"We're everywhere," he responded simply, and removed his hat, revealing the smooth, deep luster of his sunny hair.

"But why do you stand away off here? Don't you want to be seen?"

He shook his head, still smiling. Then his blue eyes shot suddenly out over her head and appraised the pay-line again.

"You don't look as if you need to be afraid of any one," she laughed as she glimpsed the brace of pistols in his belt. Then, abruptly, strangely, she sobered. "I know why you're here," she said accusingly. "You're after Eugene Satterlee!"

She searched his eyes, which had returned from the pay-line and bent to hers. She found them alight with unexpected mirth; for just then Jim Jasper wanted to shout with merriment at her calling Sharp Satterlee "Eugene."

But she had no interest in his amusement. She probed eagerly beneath it and found her accusation acknowledged.

"You are!" she repeated, convinced. "Oh, why are you? He isn't guilty. He's never done half the things he has been accused of. It seems to be his misfortune to be forever falling under suspicion."

II

JASPER didn't answer; just let his eyes sink deeper into hers.

She was Sharon Hale, and her father was Roger Hale, the Muskrat mine boss. Surely her father could have told her the truth about Satterlee's reputation; but evidently she had never asked him. Anyway, her defense of the man was incomprehensible to Jasper; and when he did not understand a condition he had to deal with, he never offered any enlightenment about it.

Sharon waited a moment. Then, when he did not answer, she came closer in her earnestness.

"If you knew he was innocent," she entreated softly, "would you let him get away?"

Jasper never committed himself.

"Perhaps," he said.

"But you think he is guilty!"

"I know he is."

"You can't know such a thing!"

"I do."

She became impatient.

"But you mustn't make such a statement. When a man is accused of a serious crime, like murder, he must have a fair trial before any one dare say as much as that!"

He was silent. He did not intend to confide to her, or to any one, the matter of the finger-prints. Then he broke out with unlooked-for vehemence.

"He is guilty of murdering a woman—I don't know for what reason, or whether for just cause; but when I'm given the job of running down a woman's murderer, I'm going to do it, and bring him to trial, if it takes me to—if it takes me forever!"

His intensity had involuntarily drawn all her attention. Her eyes, wide and gray beneath the sheen of her lashes, were caught fast to his. He became conscious of it, and forced himself to relax.

"A man murdered the woman who was all I ever had to love me," he explained quietly; and through the grim sentence trickled the loneliness of a heart-broken child.

She did not take her eyes from him, but her breath caught and stopped.

"That woman was my mother," he stated simply.

Though his eyes had returned to their scrutiny of the pay-line, the narrowed lids seemed crushed in a paroxysm of pain. She released the breath she had been holding.

"And the man who killed her?" she urged gently.

"Was my father," he finished.

"And he was hung?" she gasped in sudden horror.

"Worse than that. *He went free!* He is dead now, though," Jasper added with satisfaction.

She was very still for a moment.

"How old were you?" she asked finally.

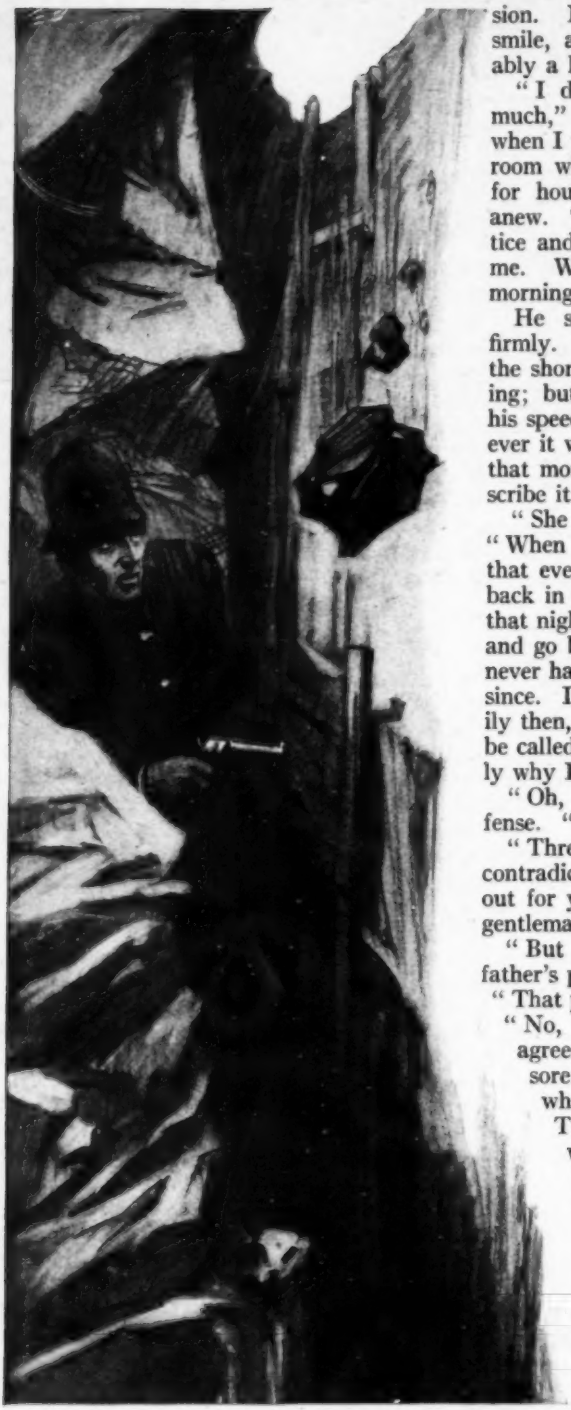
"Twelve."

"And did you see him kill her?"

"No."

"Then how are you sure that he did it?"

Again she was stickling for proof. It made him smile with a shade of condescen-



SOMETHING HUGE AND HEAVY PLUNGED PAST HIS SLIGHT SAFETY NICHE AND WENT CLATTERING DOWN THE SHAFT

sion. He seemed perpetually prompt to smile, although the smile was not invariably a happy one.

"I didn't see anything, nor hear very much," he admitted. "I only know that when I went to her in the morning, into the room where they had been alone together for hours—" He broke off and started anew. "I was a funny kid. I used to notice and love the way my mother touched me. Well, when I went in to her that morning—"

He stopped again. His voice ended firmly. His eyes shot competently out over the shortening pay-line that he was watching; but any one would have known that his speech had failed in his throat. Whatever it was that he had found and endured that morning, he could find no way to describe it.

"She was dead," he finished flatly. "When I grew up and learned the things that every man learns, I took those things back in my mind to all that had happened that night, just the way you'd get a lantern and go back to look at a dark place. I've never had any doubts about who was guilty since. I went to live with my father's family then, if a quarrelsome fighting tribe can be called a family. I suppose that is mostly why I'm a tough."

"Oh, no!" She was instant in his defense. "You're not that."

"Three-quarters of me is a tough," he contradicted regretfully. "You can figure out for yourself the percentage that is left gentleman."

"But you haven't stayed with your father's people," she contended in triumph. "That proves that you are not like them."

"No, I didn't stay with them," he agreed. "I expect they're nursing the sore yet over my leaving them just when I got to be able to earn a dollar. They'd been counting on the time when I'd earn pay for more beer; but I ran away and joined the army, and there wasn't any pay for them."

His eyes were suddenly twinkling over the disappointment of his relatives.

"How long were you in the army?"

"Eight years. Then it struck me that having served in the army would give me a chance to come here, with this bunch. I

like it here; I like the boys I'm with; I like the work."

His restless eyes came back from their fruitless labor along the pay-line and dropped once more to hers. They were openly smiling again. He had visibly dismissed the gruesome thing he had told her a moment ago and locked the door against its return into the conversation.

"You see I'm not a friend to murderers," he concluded. "I expect I'll keep hunting Satterlee until I find him; and when I find him, he'll travel along with me!"

She lowered her head a little, thoughtfully, and he had a chance to note idly the gold threading of her brown hair. His eyes dropped lower, to the virgin whiteness of her throat and breast; and it was with reluctance that he withdrew them presently to watch the pay-line.

Then, on a sudden thought:

"Did you by any chance come here, Miss Sharon, to ask me to let Satterlee off?"

She raised her head, met his glance fully.

"Oh, mercy, no!" she denied, so visibly disturbed at his surmise that he couldn't doubt her truthfulness. "Father asked me to come and get his pay. He is working long shifts now, and doesn't come out of the mines until midnight; and he has such a large amount that it's hardly safe to carry it home, alone, at that hour of night."

Jasper nodded. He knew that Roger Hale drew exceptionally high pay. He was a valuable man to the coal company, and they remunerated him accordingly. He maintained the best home in the village; he had sent his daughter away to the best school he could select.

"But your father was almost the first man to be paid," Jasper informed her. "Surely he isn't waiting around all this time for you?"

"No, he has gone back into the mine. He didn't know what time I'd come, and I didn't know what time they'd pay; so he said that when I did get here, I should just go in to him and get it."

"I see."

There was a moment's silence. They both watched the last man receive his pay and come down the steps. Then the car slipped down the switch and out upon the main line.

The girl turned to Jasper.

"I must be going," she said pleasantly. "Good-by!"

"Good-by," he responded, and watched her go.

A few steps distant, she turned back. He thought she had forgotten something she wished to say; but, after a moment's irresolution, she merely smiled and went on again, with a final little gesture of farewell. Still he watched her. Half-way across the clearing, he thought she was going to turn back again, but in the end she didn't.

"Now that's darned queer," he told himself under his breath.

Then, with a depressing sense of failure, he straightened in the saddle under the new burden of starting out to look for Satterlee all over again.

III

But first he waited to watch Sharon Hale enter the black tunnel which he knew sloped straight down into the mine. It occurred to him that she had no light, and, as she became lost in the gloom of that black mouth, he realized that she would be engulfed in utter blackness before she traveled fifty feet.

But she was not ignorant upon such a vital point, by any means. Probably some one was going to meet her inside—some one equipped with a light and with the necessary knowledge of the mine's interior. She had said that her plan was to go to the spot where her father was at work; so, apparently, her father was not the one she expected.

Right then it dawned upon him. *Her guide would be Satterlee.* She undoubtedly must see Satterlee at times to have formed so strong an opinion of his merits, and where would she see him but in connection with her father's work?

Then, on a rebound, came doubts. Perhaps this was only a fool's conclusion. Probably Satterlee was miles away. Still, if his surmise was right and Satterlee, in there, had been too wary to come out to receive his pay, it meant that he could and would keep himself concealed in the intricate mazes of the coal-mines indefinitely.

Jasper wished he had time to think it over; but he hadn't. Instantly he was off his horse and walking rapidly across the space Sharon had just traversed. He entered the slope from one side, keeping close to that side as he trod lightly down its sharp decline, and thus out of the direct light from the entrance, lest the girl some-

where in the darkness ahead of him should look back.

He advanced swiftly into total blackness, losing the one small dot of daylight from the opening with each step he took. He could distinguish nothing ahead of him in the blackness, and he knew it was rash to thrust forward without guidance. Unguided men have been lost thus times without number. Nevertheless, Jasper pressed forward, keeping his unlighted bull's-eye continually under his fingers, in his coat pocket.

He recognized that there were doubtless many chambers running into this one he was in, and he had no way of knowing whether the girl had already turned off into one of these or was in the darkness somewhere ahead. He kept on, however, stepping carefully to silence his movements, and straining his ears to catch any sound which might give him information.

Then suddenly two figures were in the gloom far ahead of him, one of them carrying a lighted miner's lamp on his cap. In the dim light from that lamp, Jasper was finally able to discern that the other figure was a woman's. So far, his surmise would seem to have been correct. Evidently some workman had come from some other part of the mine to meet Sharon.

He tried to gain on them and to silence his progress at the same time, which was difficult in view of the fact that the two in front were swinging along at a rapid pace, indifferent to the sounds they made, and having all the light to their advantage.

Jasper, stumbling on in obscurity, was finding it as much as he could do to keep in sight of that tiny flaring light close to the roof. Once they turned into another chamber, and he ventured to use his bull's-eye to light his way to the spot where they had turned off. This enabled him to increase his speed greatly; but when he came in sight of their dim figures, far up the black passageway they had turned into, he was forced to conceal his light again and stumble on in the dark.

He tried to take heed of the turns and windings in their route in case he should have to find his way back alone; but soon he realized that it was useless, and that he must trust to good fortune to get out.

As Jasper became accustomed to the rough footing, he was able to gain on them a little. He had gradually got near enough to hear their voices with fair distinctness. Sharon Hale's clear tones were unmistakable. Her companion's regard and thoughtfulness for her were also made manifest. He paused frequently to search and point out the best places for her to walk. At times, when the little single car-track they were following became submerged in water, he balanced her on the rail, with his hand on her arm, so that she might keep her footing up out of the mire.

It was when he turned partly around in doing this that Jasper managed to glimpse his profile. The man was Satterlee!

With that recognition, Jasper momentarily forgot, in an overwhelming bitterness, the thing he had come there to do. For just a moment he might have been in truth his father's son—the way his lean, powerful hands gripped in search of prey. Then, directly, he had mastered himself. If something superfine and excellent voluntarily chose to be desecrated by Satterlee, why, surely it lay outside the jurisdiction of a trooper of the State; and that was all he was to Sharon Hale, and all he cared to be in future, he felt.

IV

JASPER advanced with double caution as he came nearer to them. He wanted to steal close enough to take his man unawares. He also made every effort to quicken his speed, for he wanted to reach them before they came upon other workmen. Should he come upon Satterlee in the presence of a group of the rougher element sometimes to be found in such a mine, he knew that common hatred of him and his profession would cause them to combine against him. In that case he would lose not only Satterlee, but possibly his life. In the hard-coal country, the black world of the underground is frequently too deep to be dealt with by on-top-of-the-ground laws.

He splashed through water and stumbled over the uneven ties of the track; falling, bruising himself, ramming his head repeatedly against the low roof. But he struggled on, silently, like a powerful shadow traversing the gloom, the drab of his uniform fitting his lithe body like its own flesh, his wary hands maintaining close touch with all his weapons, his senses alert to the straining point.

He wondered how far she had expected to go to meet her father. He felt that they must have traveled underground the greater portion of a mile. He believed that if they

had much farther to go, Roger Hale would not have asked his daughter to come, unless he had provided some means for her to ride.

Somewhere in the rear there sounded a furious, menacing uproar. A mule-team was tearing forward with its rattling train of cars. It stirred him to uneasiness, for he knew that the mule-boys who drive these wild teams are generally perched on the last car. If that was so in this case, Jasper would stand no chance of being seen in time, unless he used his search-light, which he did not wish to do, or found some convenient avenue of escape.

He watched Satterlee to see if he evinced any signs of solicitude, for the fugitive's light was so small that the driver might not notice it—especially if the passage was, as it appeared to be, a little-used one, where a less careful watch would be kept for traffic. These things Satterlee would know.

Meanwhile the hubbub was swelling into a great clattering roar in the dark arches beyond; and presently Satterlee turned—too abruptly for his pursuer to dodge aside. So, although the mule-team was too distant to be seen, the fugitive caught sight of Jasper.

With a startled curse, Satterlee began to run, taking the broken footing with long, sure strides. Sharon Hale, no doubt supposing his flight to be due to the approaching mule-team, ran too.

All necessity for stealth past, Jasper now swung into hot pursuit, pulling his bull's-eye from his pocket as he ran, and making instant use of it. It brought into view the pitfalls in his road, the sprinting figure of the man ahead, and, between that man and himself, the girl's amazed face as she turned back in startled wonder to discover who or what was upon their trail. Then, no doubt considering it safer to keep somewhere near the lights in that place of darkness, she continued in her flight until Jasper overtook and passed her.

After that he could have used his revolver, certain of hitting no one other than the man he sought; but he did not care to take an advantage which might seem unfair, from the girl's point of view, in his dealings with the man she favored. Besides, he believed he could capture Satterlee uninjured and alive.

It was a long race through cruel blackness. Satterlee had all the advantage of knowing the ground. He had the quickness and litheness of a cat, too, leaping from spot to spot where the tracks were flooded and never falling, though Jasper lost his footing twice.

They passed other tunnels opening into theirs, all offering possible avenues of escape from the mule-team which continued to thunder in their rear. That Satterlee did not turn into any of these chambers made it evident to his pursuer that he had a definite goal and knew how to reach it; so Jasper followed him, unswerved by the danger of being run down.

Then, suddenly, he saw Satterlee's hand reach up and sweep off his miner's cap, with its lighted lamp, and hold it above his head. The next instant a lurid, unwholesome flame was spreading itself over the entire ceiling, snapping and roaring its way toward the opaqueness that lay behind.

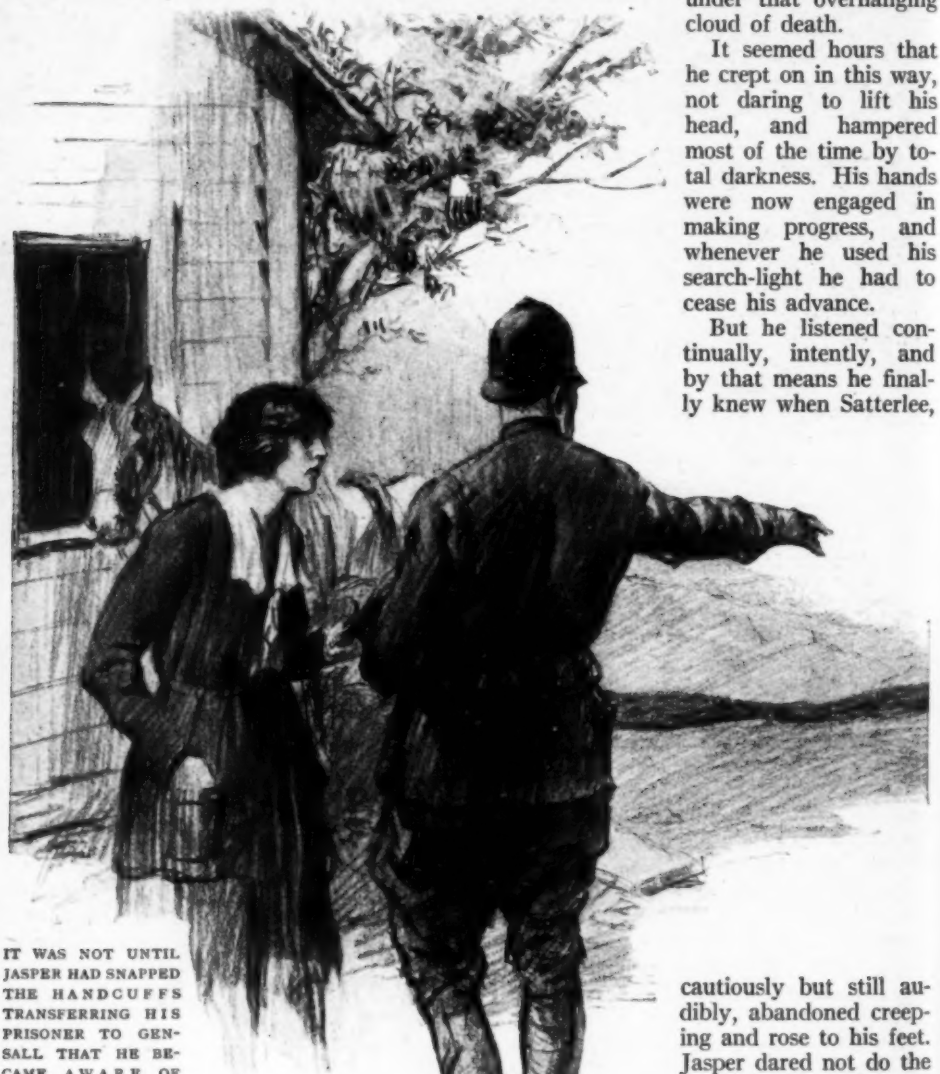
Jasper, who had been keeping Satterlee within the white finger of his bull's-eye, saw him drop to the ground the second after he had raised his lamp. With the quick reasoning that becomes instinct in men of his stamp, he dropped likewise. Whatever the danger that threatened, they were trapped on all sides by black distance and black walls; and Satterlee was the one who knew best what to do.

Then, slowly, hazily, through long association with the mining country, Jasper began to understand. Satterlee had done this thing! His knowledge of the mine had acquainted him with a spot where a pocket of gas nestled close against the ceiling. He had "shot it off," as the miners say, knowing how to escape its effects himself, and hoping that his pursuer would be less wise and fall a victim. That the girl who championed him might also fall a victim had not deterred him in the least.

The stillness was intense. The flames were gone, leaving their invisible but no less deadly film of poisonous gas in the upper portions of the tunnel. Jasper, not daring to raise his head, shifted his bull's-eye so as to send its light back along the way he had come, in search of the girl, whom they had left somewhere behind them. He soon discerned her, crouched also against the ground. He might have known she would be wise enough for that; he could have spared himself a sharp moment's anxiety.

Then he remembered the mule-team that had been racketing back there a moment ago. He recollected that even the mules,

accustomed to the peculiar dangers of these underground passages, were instinctively wise enough to drop in the presence of deadly gas. Thus, he reflected grimly, Satterlee, in trying to precipitate him into one danger, had unintentionally saved him from another.



IT WAS NOT UNTIL JASPER HAD SNAPPED THE HANDCUFFS TRANSFERRING HIS PRISONER TO GENSALL THAT HE BECAME AWARE OF SHARON'S PRESENCE

As his mind, out of all this chaos, adjusted itself to conditions as they were, he instantly sent his bull's-eye groping after Satterlee again, to find that the fugitive was still moving along the tunnel, crawling on hands and knees. Jasper promptly imitated the method, bruising the flesh of his hands, sinking repeatedly into lakes of soft mud, all the while keeping himself crouched under that overhanging cloud of death.

It seemed hours that he crept on in this way, not daring to lift his head, and hampered most of the time by total darkness. His hands were now engaged in making progress, and whenever he used his search-light he had to cease his advance.

But he listened continually, intently, and by that means he finally knew when Satterlee, cautiously but still audibly, abandoned creeping and rose to his feet. Jasper dared not do the same until he had struggled to the spot where Satterlee had risen. The fugitive knew safety from danger.

And when the pursuer gained that point and struggled stiffly to his feet, Satterlee was gone—he had vanished utterly! Jasper's bull's-eye, lighting up the passage ahead and exploring every inch of the rocky walls on either side, failed to reveal any trace of him; failed to reveal anything but turbid blackness.

Presently Sharon Hale was standing suddenly there beside Jasper. She was mud-drenched, and her face was covered with coal grime.

He scarcely noticed her. His eyes shifted on in the emptiness, searching for what he could not find, for what she did not want him to find. He felt friendless, hopeless, beaten.

"There is only one place he could have gone," he heard her saying. "That's up the air-shaft. There's an air-shaft near here somewhere."

He felt one of her hands on his arm, and sensed the other groping against the wall. Instantly responsive, he flashed his light minutely over the surface she was trying to examine.

"It is just here," she whispered, stepping ahead of him. She reached back and drew him after her from the main tunnel into a tiny recess off to one side. "An air-shaft," she repeated, as if he had not understood.

He flashed his lamp about the interior of the black hole in which they stood. The light revealed nothing. It was merely the inside of a pocket. There did not seem to be any air-shaft.

Jasper felt that the girl was only trying to throw him off the trail. She was for Satterlee; had been from the first. She was merely defiling herself further with the filth of the murderer's guilt.

He wished with all his heart that she wouldn't insist upon lying to him! If she lied to some other man, it wouldn't seem so unbearable; but to him, who had known her and glorified her so long! Jasper endeavored to shut the unpleasant thought from him with a savage lunge of his arm across his eyes.

"Listen!" she commanded out of the obscurity. "You can hear him—if you listen!"

He stood motionless, rigid, and in the intense stillness he could hear something scrambling somewhere above their heads. There *was* an air-shaft!

Suddenly alert, he began to search once more, using his light minutely on every inch of the wall, exploring meanwhile with his free hand over its surface. He felt a rough round, evidently belonging to some sort of a ladder. He abandoned the light, and, seizing the round with both hands, drew himself up, scufflingly secured some sort of foothold for the toes of his boots in the jagged wall, and clung thus while his hand went searching upward for the round above.

He found it at last, and seized it. Then he paused.

"Go on!" he heard Sharon Hale urge from below. "I'll be all right. Nothing will harm me. I am not on any track here, you know!"

There was no time to hesitate. An air-shaft is difficult climbing unless one knows its special peculiarities, for scarce two are ever alike. This one seemed unusually dark and difficult, apparently consisting of a series of miscellaneous and variegated ladders, connected here and there by short slopes and natural ascents, all struggling

"TAKE HIM DOWN AS FAR AS THE FLATS," JASPER DIRECTED GENSALL. "I'LL MEET YOU THERE"

upward in darkness and confusion. Undoubtedly they led to some sort of opening at the top—one of those raw holes in the surface of the ground which have been roughly enlarged and deepened for the purpose of letting air down into the coal-mines far beneath.

In the wake of his man, Jasper struggled groping up that terrible ascent, clinging desperately by fingers and toes. In the brief snatches of quiet between his own struggles, he heard the frantic ascent of the man he was following. As he climbed, this strange flight and pursuit seemed to him more and more unbelievable, more and more uncanny. The world of the coal-mines had dropped out of existence beneath their feet; the world of every day was still inaccessible above their heads. Pursuer and pursued were enclosed, apart and still alone together, in a great crack in the earth; and still each strove frantically to thwart the other.

It was by some inexplicable instinct that Jasper knew when his man had gained the top. The knowledge came as a sharp stab of danger to his consciousness, and he drew back sharply under a protecting ledge of rock, wondering simultaneously just why he did so.

At that very instant something huge and heavy plunged past his slight safety niche, and went clattering and pounding on down the shaft. It was a rock that Satterlee had hurled.

Jasper thought of the girl down below, but he had no fear for her. He knew that the rock's noisy descent would warn her of its coming long before it could strike her. He did wonder, however, if he would have time to climb higher and find another retreat before Satterlee should send down another missile.

He took a pistol from his belt and fired rapidly upward three times. Then, securing a hold on the ledge of rock above his head, he pulled himself once more upward.

V

THE noise of another rock warned him of its clumsy descent, and he flattened himself against the side of the shaft, so that it missed him by the width of a finger. Then he toiled upward again, and reached a spot where the shaft was only a sloping tunnel, which presently afforded him an opportunity for scrambling alertly out of the path of a third massive stone.

He recognized that he was in an ugly situation, but he was counting off to his credit every pause that Satterlee required to find more missiles. When the rocks finally ceased coming, he must have been close to the top, for it was only a moment later that he pulled himself out upon the surface of the ground.

In that moment, however, Satterlee had disappeared. Blank, insipid failure again greeted him. No sign of life was to be glimpsed on the rocky hillside, nor in the sparse woods that crowned it, nor among the black culm-piles that footed it.

Jasper, for the moment reanimated into a sheer hunter, a trapper of men, thought grimly and fast. He studied the barren landscape minutely, with darting glances of appraisal. No detail missed him—certainly not the fallen, rotting log half-way up the slope.

He drew out his pistol as he walked toward it. He would take no chances on Satterlee now, for the man, though unarmed, had revealed amazing capacity for developing unexpected and dangerous resources of strategy.

Prone upon the ground, wormed halfway underneath the farther side of the log's bulk, Jasper found his man. It cannot be said truthfully that he took his prisoner very quietly or good-naturedly. The fresh memory of those down-plunging rocks which he had only narrowly dodged; that noxious, flaming gas which would have burned the life from his lungs, had he remained standing in it a second too long; and, above all, Sharon Hale—these things combined to open his lips; and when a State trooper opens his lips upon such things, the words that pour forth are apt to burn any page that would venture to print them.

But he *did* take his man; and twenty minutes later he brought him to the spot at the corner of the Muskrat breaker where he had left his horse.

The animal was standing quietly. Constabulary horses are trained to wait. Beside him was another mount from the barracks, newly arrived, and ridden by Gensall, sent from headquarters to replace Yeates, who had evidently reported his own illness and Jasper's need of a colleague. Jasper groaned at sight of him.

"Take this hell-hound, will you, Gensall? I need five minutes to get rid of some of this mud."

Gensall grinned and complied. The grin was in good-natured observance of Jasper's ignorance of the fact that Sharon Hale stood not ten paces distant, a listener to his unguarded remarks.

It was not until Jasper had snapped the handcuffs transferring his prisoner to Gensall that he became aware of Sharon's presence. Then he turned upon her slowly and met her eyes straight and direct.

"Take him down as far as the flats," he directed Gensall. "I'll meet you there."

He heard them move off behind him; but still he stood, holding that quiet gaze upon Sharon Hale. She had made the acquaintance of a wash-room since he had last seen her, but she still bore evidence of the terrible journey she had had. She came toward him a step or two, obviously embarrassed by his gaze.

"Father heard the shooting, and came to find out what the trouble was; so he found me and brought me out of the mine," she explained.

He did not answer. Instead, he leaped straight to the question that was baffling his thoughts.

"If you believe Satterlee innocent, why did you put me wise to that air-shaft?"

"I don't believe him innocent. I knew he was guilty the minute he shot that gas down there. No innocent man would have done such a murderous thing—only a desperate one, black with guilt." She was telling it to him with swift, eager intensity. "You see, he had told me such pathetic stories, whenever I had occasion to require him as guide or messenger to father—how he was always being misrepresented and misunderstood. I nearly came back before I went into the mine this afternoon to tip you off that he was going to meet me inside; but then I couldn't. It seemed like a traitor's trick, after he had trusted me; but I wanted to do it—for you. I wanted to make you feel that some one was with you." Suddenly she stepped close to where he stood, and her hands came to rest impulsively on the drab sleeves of his coat. "I am all with you," she said slowly; "all for you!"—and waited, thus.

He did not move to touch her. He stood quietly looking down. Life—his life—had never known a tense or tragic or beautiful moment that his surroundings and associates had not promptly translated into vulgar warfare or ribald mirth; but he knew what this meant, coming from such a woman—his ideal of womanhood.

He smiled slowly, because smiling had grown to be his way of accepting life and fate—a smile that crinkled the sun-bronzed skin at the outer corners of his eyes into meshes of tiny lines.

"For me, Sharon?" he asked pleasantly, but under the level tones rioted sudden, incredulous joy.

"Yes," she said steadily, "for you!"

He took what she offered, then, crushing her supple shoulders close in the rigid hollow of his arm. Miraculously, with the touch of her lips, an open need that Charmion Jasper had guiltlessly left festering in his soul was filled—and healed.

MEMORIES

Ofttimes into the silence of my room
There gently steals a faint and sweet perfume,
As if an ardent rose, soft-stirred by love,
Fluttered its petals small like trembling dove.

Lo, from each crimson leaf there quickly falls
A little tender dream that softly calls
And bids my lonely heart again to see
The smallest treasures of my memory;

A golden hope that thrilled me as it came,
A happy bird that warbled in the rain,
A joy that made my heart so glad and strong,
The hallowed beauty of my mother's song;

The sunset glory in an evening sky,
The soft appeal within a violet's eye.
These tiny rose-leaves with their film of tears
Fall bright across the pathway of the years!

Nancy Buckley

The Samovar Girl*

A ROMANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

By Frederick Moore

Author of "Siberia To-Day," "Sailor Girl," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY STOCKTON MULFORD

IN an exile colony in Siberia, Gorekin, the bootmaker, is allowed the freedom of the town of Chita, adjoining the prison walls, and occupies a little hut there with his ten-year-old son, Peter. While watching the arrival of Katerin, the young daughter of Governor Michael Kirsakoff, Peter accidentally gets in the way, and is charged with disrespect; and when his father tries to save him from the penalty, the old man is killed by the saber of a cruel Cossack.

Twenty years pass, and revolution overturns the ancient order in Russia. In Chita, Michael Kirsakoff and his daughter Katerin, now grown to superb womanhood, find themselves stripped of authority and in the power of a Mongol chieftain named Zorogoff. When the latter sends an officer, Captain Shimilin, to demand money, Katerin, who has hidden most of her father's funds in a stove, hands over a fraction of the amount demanded and claims that it is all they have. Shimilin, disbelieving, orders both her father and herself in front of a firing squad, but releases them by order of Zorogoff, who is impressed by Katerin's beauty and courage, and proclaims his intention of making her his wife.

Meanwhile Lieutenant Peter Gordon, of the United States Army, arrives in Chita, ostensibly on an official mission from Vladivostok, but in reality to inflict vengeance upon those responsible for his father's murder. For the American lieutenant is none other than Peter Gorekin, son of the old bootmaker so ruthlessly slain for daring to get in the way of Governor Michael Kirsakoff and his daughter. Having learned from an old Russian named Rimsky, keeper of a little shop, that the Kirsakoffs live in Chita, Peter takes up his residence in a hotel there.

Rimsky plots with Ilya Andreitch to get money from Kirsakoff by selling him the information that an American lieutenant is seeking him; but Ilya gets Rimsky drunk and proceeds alone to the hiding-place of the Kirsakoffs.

X

ILYA ANDREITCH, having left Rimsky in a state of gorgeous befuddlement at the restaurant, hurried up the street on his way to the house of Michael Kirsakoff, with the news that an American had come and was seeking the former governor.

Ilya could see the glowing coals of a sentinels' bonfire up near the church. He could hear music and singing from a barrack, and the rattle of a droshky coming across the wooden bridge over the Ingoda. There was no moon yet, but the stars were out and hanging low. The thin, sweet air drenched his lungs, and cleared his brain a trifle.

Ilya heard a man walking near him. He stopped to listen, cocking his head to one side; but when Ilya stopped, the other man stopped also. Then Ilya realized that it was his own footsteps that he heard, crunching the hard snow musically. He laughed discreetly, taking care that the sentries should not hear him, and started on again.

But he was a little frightened, and he got off the walk into the soft, sandy road, so that his boots made little noise. By being careful, he knew he could get past some of the sentry groups without being stopped and questioned.

He got out his bottle—the bottle he had taken from Rimsky's table—and had a swig at it to give himself courage. He knew it took courage to go and talk to Kirsakoff, who was a cruel old bones of a man, though an excellence.

But Ilya reflected that times had changed. He was as good as anybody. The revolution had done that for him.

The more he thought about it, the more credit he gave himself for getting from Rimsky the news about the American. Kirsakoff should give at least five rubles, not a copeck less.

A wolf howled on the hill above the city, and Ilya crossed himself against the wiles of the devil. He passed the black dome of the church. The air was like crystal, and nothing cast a shadow, not even the iron fence around the old cemetery of the church. There are witches about when the stars are so bright that nothing throws a shadow.

"YOU FOOL!" GROWLED WASSILI. "WHY DO YOU COME IN THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE STARS?"

Ilya hurried on, getting more nervous, till he was well outside the city, and then crossed some old gardens to get in among the log houses which stood at the end of a street. In that way he avoided a group of sentries, singing about their fire.

He found Kirsakoff's house. It stood on a corner of two streets, with a wall enclosing the *dvor*, or courtyard, with the garden, the well, the wagon-sheds. It was here that Michael Kirsakoff was hiding, though the windows let out no light. They were white with frost, shining in the starlight like tablets of ivory set into the log walls.

Ilya went round to the great gate. There were some old water-casks lying about in disorder. Ilya moved one of them close to the wall, and, mounting it, reached up to where some old wires and cords ran along the top among dead vines. He took off his mittens and felt for a certain number of knots on one of the cords. He pulled thrice, then climbed down and stood in close to the wall, so that his figure would be merged with the dark background of logs.

A sentry fire burned redly in the distance, out at the end of the street, and a few dark figures about it were visible. Somewhere Ilya heard a Cossack challenge, and the rattle of a rifle-bolt. A pig began to squeal off in the direction of the Chinese quarter. The friendly barking of dogs was missing—the dogs had disappeared since the troubles came.

The unnatural stillness of the night held a covert menace, as if all creatures, men and wild beasts, were walking about on their toes or crouched for a spring at some lurking enemy. It was likely that hill tigers were about. The occasional howling of wolves seemed to have a note of triumph, as if they were waiting for their old wilderness to be restored to them. They were now hunting close to the city, and getting bold and fat.

A small door in the wall, close to where Ilya stood, opened inward a few inches, and Ilya slipped through the narrow opening quickly. The door closed after him.

"It is Ilya Andreitch," he whispered to the silent figure of a man standing near him.

"You fool!" growled Wassili cautiously. "Why do you come in the brightness of the stars? And you smell of a *kabak*."

"What does it matter?" demanded Ilya easily.

"You will be seen," said the servant.

"I? No one saw me."

"What brings you?"

"I have news."

Ilya swayed unsteadily on his feet, for the vodka he had drunk was still asserting its potency. He blew gently down into his whiskers to soften the ice which had formed from his breath.

"News of what?" asked Wassili, still doubtful about Ilya.

"When a man brings news, he might have a glass of hot tea," hinted Ilya.

"You have brought a monkey with you," muttered Wassili, but he went about fastening the bolt of the door. He was shivering with the cold, and inclined to be sulky.

"Whoosh! Is not the monkey smarter than the fox? You old pothead, you sit here looking at your feet all day, while I learn news and—"

"Be still!" warned Wassili. "You smell of fresh-killed pig and vodka. Is that the way to come to the house of excellence? Come along with your noisy tongue, but keep your fingers on it—it wags too freely."

"Yes, and a drink for you, if you have a fire in your samovar, you old spider!"

"It is good you bring something," grumbled Wassili, and led the way under a dark shed to the door of the kitchen.

Ilya stumbled along, blundering among kettles and other gear, and making such a racket that Wassili cursed him for having so many legs; but the wood-cutter, in a gay mood, chuckled into his beard. He was only concerned lest he might fall and break the precious bottle in his pocket.

They went into the kitchen, which had the windows hung with old blankets. A wall-stove warmed it, and a candle burned on the table. There were partridge feathers in a sink, and on a board lay the remnants of cabbages that had been cut up. A big earthen jar of gooseberry jam stood open on the table, and beside it a yellow bowl full of white honey, giving off a sweet odor which made Ilya think of the fields in summer.

Wassili sat down and rested his elbows on the table. His pock-marked face was glum, and his pale yellow whiskers bristled with belligerency. His pale blue caftan, suggestive of a Chinese coolie, was strapped about him with an embroidered strip of scarlet cloth. His feet were wrapped in skins, ready to be slipped into the big boots standing by the bench on which he sat.

"Let us be merry while we can," said Ilya, as he sat down on the bench and loosened the rope about his coat. He pulled the bottle from his pocket with a demonstration of good-fellowship, and slammed it upon the table. "I will have a glass of tea and a spice-cake. I bring good news for the master!"

"The wind is full of news," said Wassili, but he was in better humor at sight of the bottle.

"And how is the health of excellence?" demanded Ilya, his courage bolstered by a remembrance of his own importance.

Without answering, Wassili poured himself a generous draft from the bottle into a glass, and, nodding to Ilya in place of speaking a health, tossed off the liquor with a clicking sound in his throat.

"Bring the spice-cakes, and the glasses for tea," he called out to the cooking-room.

An old serving woman peered into the kitchen, and then went for the cakes.

"I have come to see Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff," announced Ilya, crossing his legs importantly.

"Excellence is gone. There is no one in the house but myself and the woman."

"May the devil tear out your tongue—it is not truth!"

"Then go above and see for yourself," said Wassili surlily, with a flourish of his arm.

The old woman shuffled in with tea and

cakes and put them before Ilya, bestowing on him a look of suspicion, and giving Wassili a glance of disapproval. She did not linger, but disappeared into the cooking-room.

"I have news about an American," said Ilya, picking up a cake and inspecting it carefully by the candle-light.

Wassili turned upon him quickly.

"An American! There are no Americans in the city—only in Vladivostok."

"Then you know better than I," said Ilya, and bit into the cake.

"You are drunk!" scorned Wassili.

"True, and may I die drunk! Would I run my legs off to come here and risk bullets in my body, when I might be sitting by the fire with my bottle? Do you think I came all that distance just to look at you, old mudhead?"

"Where are these Americans you talk about?"

"I shall go and tell the American officer that Kirsakoff and his daughter have gone, eh? Very good! That will be all right, I suppose — till it happens that way, and then excellence will kick you till you squeal."

"Tell me what you know."

"I shall tell excellence myself. I am a free man. What good is a revolution, if one man cannot talk to another? Go and tell excellence that Ilya Andreitch, who cut wood for him in the year of the pestilence, has come."

Wassili laughed, and taking advantage of a fit of sneezing suffered by Ilya from having eaten a cake dry, helped himself to another draft from the bottle.

"Perhaps I had better tell excellence there is a grand duke here to see him, eh?" he suggested.

"I am as good as a grand duke," agreed Ilya. "I am alive to enjoy my vodka, and many a grand duke would like to be able to say that, you old fishgut!"

"See that you don't finish the bottle while I'm gone," Wassili warned him, and turned to go up-stairs.

XI

"MASTER, Ilya Andreitch has come with news."

Michael Kirsakoff looked up from the table where he was writing a letter by the light of a candle, to stare in startled surprise at Wassili, who had pushed the door open without knocking.

"Who is it that has come?" demanded the old general.

"Ilya Andreitch, who once cut wood for the excellence—I know him well, and he has bought food for us in the bazaar. He helped me bring many of the things to this house, so he knew the excellence was living here."

"What news does he bring?" asked Katerin.

She had been standing half-hidden among the curtains by the window, listening for noises outside the house, for she had heard Ilya coming in. She stepped out into the light cast by the candle and looked at Wassili eagerly.

"There is an American officer come to Chita, looking for the excellence," said Wassili, with a bow. "It is Ilya who says it, and he—"

Katerin gave a cry of joy and struck her hands together.

"My father!" she cried. "Can God be so good?"

"Is this American sent by friends?" asked Michael, when he had recovered from his first surprise. "By the holy saints! Are we to escape from Zorogoff after all?"

Katerin began to cry, and threw her arms about her father's neck, kissing him wildly.

"Our friends have sent him to save us! I knew they would, if they got our letters! God is good to us, and you shall have peace and safety at last, my father!"

"It is you I am thinking of, Katerin Stephanovna," said Michael.

His face lit up with a smile as he grasped her hands and pulled them to his mouth to kiss them. His eyes shone with the reflected light of the candle, making a pair of gleaming points in the half-gloom as he sat gazing at the figure of Wassili standing before him. The broad gold straps on his shoulders set off his white old head as if it rested upon a golden tray, and threw off a quivering sheen of yellow light with the trembling of his body. His thin white hand dropped the pen upon the paper.

"Tell us, tell us, Wassili," pleaded Katerin. "Did the American bring word from friends? Will he come here to us—and take us away?"

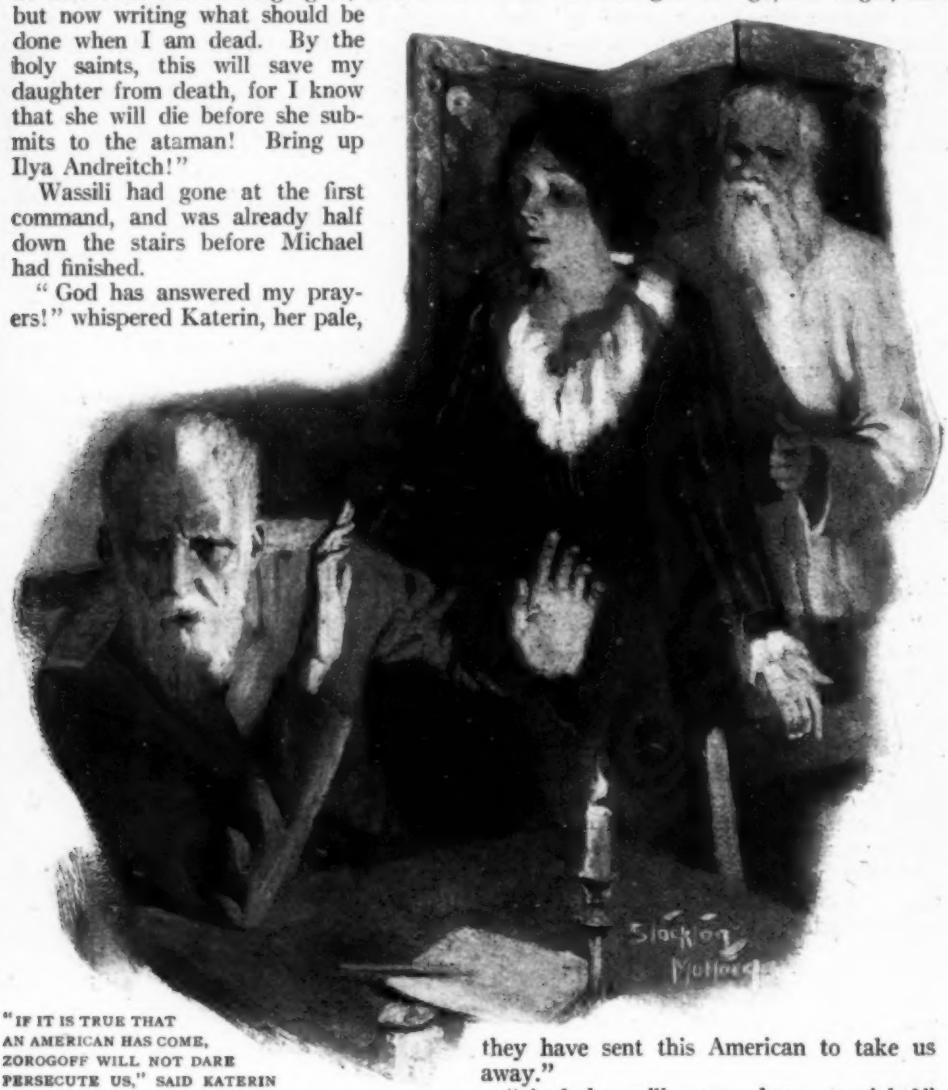
Michael's head snapped forward, its wisps of white hair waving gently, and his eyes bored into Wassili while waiting for the answer.

"Ilya Andreitch will tell no one but excellence," said Wassili.

"He is below? Bring him up—hasten! We have no time to lose! Zorogoff may be here with the morning again, and I am but now writing what should be done when I am dead. By the holy saints, this will save my daughter from death, for I know that she will die before she submits to the ataman! Bring up Ilya Andreitch!"

Wassili had gone at the first command, and was already half down the stairs before Michael had finished.

"God has answered my prayers!" whispered Katerin, her pale, drawn face alight with joy over the deliverance so close at hand.



"IF IT IS TRUE THAT AN AMERICAN HAS COME, ZOROGOFF WILL NOT DARE PERSECUTE US," SAID KATERIN

It was five days since the ataman had left, and father and daughter lived in terror of his return—in terror of his threat against Katerin. They did not doubt that Zorogoff would take them to his "palace" in revenge for their insults, and they had planned to die together rather than permit the Mongol ruler to carry out his evil purpose.

"It is our friends, the Baranoffs, who have arranged this," said Michael. "Our letter to them got through, I'll wager, and they have sent this American to take us away."

"And he will come here—to-night?" asked Katerin. "I can scarcely believe that we shall be safe. My father, I had given up hope. Do you think this American will come to us at once?"

"We shall see," said Michael. "Perhaps Ilya brings a letter from him."

"If the ataman should learn of this American before he can reach us—"

"They are coming up," said Michael.

They heard Wassili and Ilya mounting the stairs, and soon saw through the open door the light of a shaking candle against the wall of the hall.

"This man is Ilya Andreitch, master," said Wassili, blowing out the candle he carried and thrusting the nervous Ilya into the room.

Ilya blinked, bowed, and stood with his cap in his hand, fingering it.

"You bring us news, Ilya Andreitch?" said Michael gently.

His thin, cracked voice betrayed the emotion he felt—relief from months of danger in a world which had apparently gone mad.

"I? Yes, excellence, I bring good news to your house — and the mistress." He bowed again to Katerin.

"An American officer has sent you," prompted Katerin, seeing that Ilya was perturbed.

"He is at the Dauria," said Ilya, and turned to Wassili, as if for help in telling his story.

"Yes," said Katerin. "Have you a message from him?"

"I? Who knows?"

He bowed again, to cover his confusion.

"Is the blockhead drunk?" growled Michael. "Come, speak up! Or have you swallowed your tongue?"

"Have no fear, Ilya," said Katerin soothingly.

"Rimsky told me," blurted Ilya.

"And who is Rimsky?" asked Michael.

"An old friend—a good man, excellence," said Ilya, rubbing the foot of his left boot against the leg of his right.

"What did Rimsky tell you?" prompted Michael.

"That the excellence would pay me well to bring the news."

Michael laughed to cover his irritation.

"So you have a friend who spends my money, eh? And so I will pay you—if you will tell us what the American said."

Ilya began to twist his cap furiously with both hands.

"Excellence, I have done no harm," he began. "I am a poor man. I am very secret. Rimsky tried to fish from me where the excellence lived, but I did not tell him, and left him drunk."

"Who is Rimsky? What has all this to do with the American officer?" asked Michael impatiently.

"Rimsky sells cigarettes in an old *isba* in the Sofistkaya. He said it was a pity he did not know where the excellence lived, and he fished me for it. That is all—I came to tell excellence."

"But he told you about the American," said Wassili, prodding Ilya in the ribs. "Tell the master, as you told me!"

"It is as I say," retorted Ilya, with a show of anger. "There is an American come seeking Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff. It is truth!"

"How do you know?" asked Katerin, beginning to feel that there was no basis for their hopes except some scheming peasant's desire to get money from her father.

"Rimsky told me, mistress," said Ilya, with a bow.

"And Rimsky sent you here?" asked Michael.

"Me? No, master. Rimsky does not know I came to this house. He has no knowledge of where excellence lives, for I am very secret. I tell no one."

"Then the American did not send you, eh?" snapped Michael. "You know nothing of any American but what this fool of a Rimsky told you, eh?"

"There is an American, excellence," insisted Ilya.

Michael sighed disgustedly, and leaned back in his chair.

"It is nothing after all," he said sadly.

Katerin, however, did not abandon hope so readily.

"Ilya Andreitch, I will give you fifty rubles if you will go to the American and ask him why he seeks us. You say he is at the Dauria. Very well, will you take a note to him?"

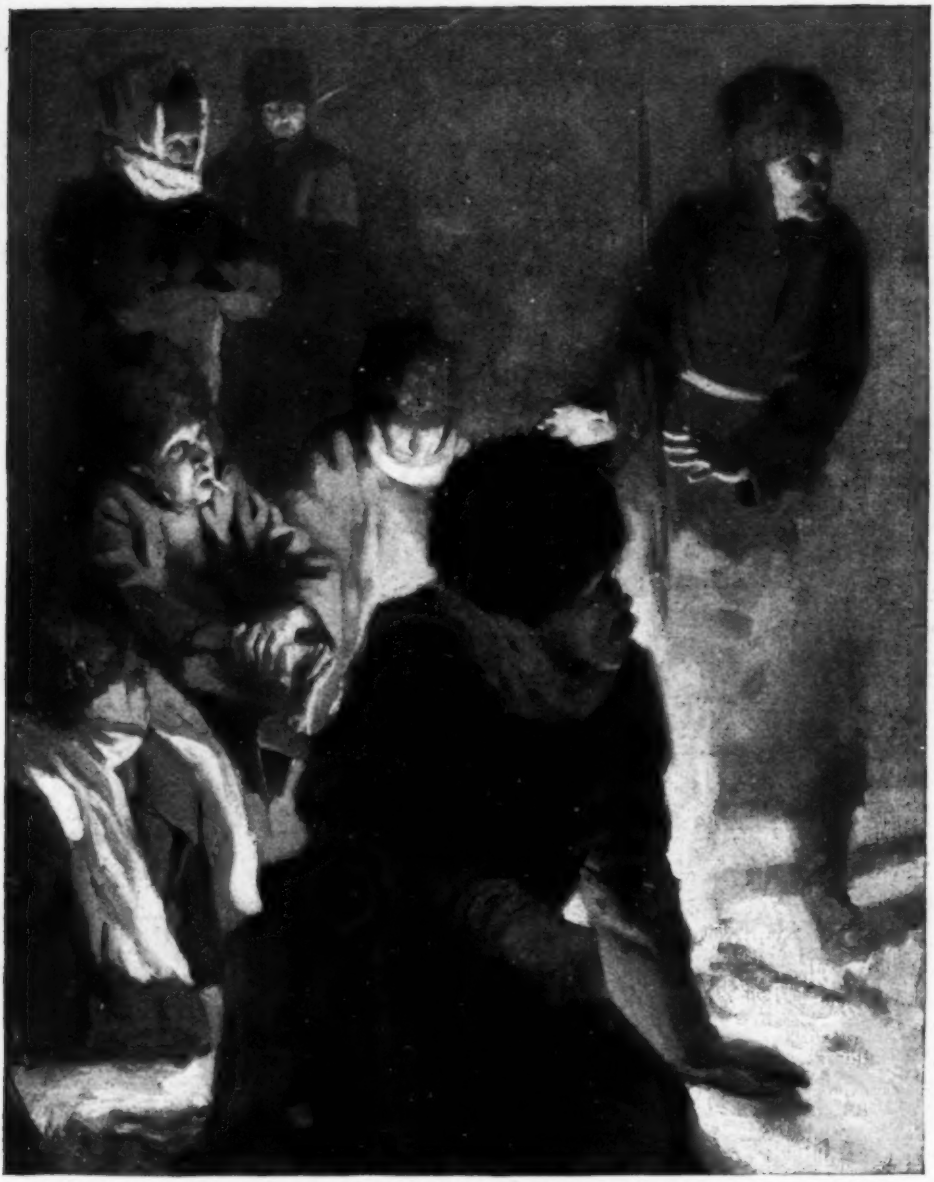
"I can find him, mistress," said Ilya, his eyes aglitter at the promise of such a rich reward. "I speak truth—there is an American officer come seeking General Kirsakoff."

"This is a trap of Zorogoff's to get us to leave the house," growled Michael. "Zorogoff's spies got Rimsky to tell this to Ilya, and then they watch the house if we try to escape. Or they want you to go to the hotel, so that they can capture you there. It is a trap, my daughter!"

But Katerin had picked up the pen on the table, and wrote upon a sheet of paper:

This man will take a message to those you seek. Time is precious. Who sends you?

She did not sign it, but dried it over the candle, folded it, and thrust it at Ilya, with

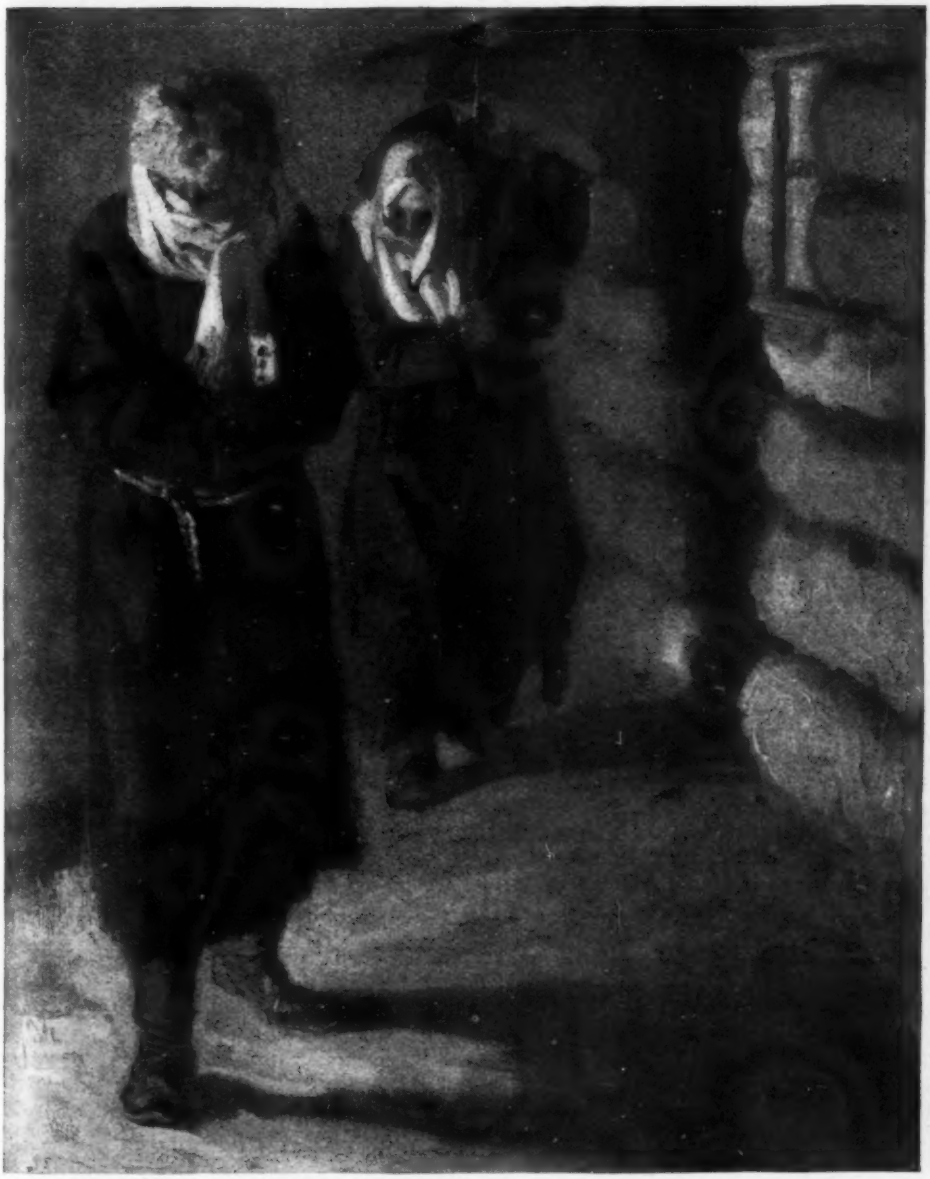


MICHAEL AND KATERIN FELT THAT THEY HAD A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING TO THE HOTEL WITHOUT BEING—

a handful of rubles which she took from a book upon the table.

"Give this to the American officer, if there be one at the Dauria. If he wishes to find us, let him tell you so; but do not come back here. Wassili will meet you in front of the sobrania at midnight. You tell Wassili what the American says. Do not tell him where we are, but get him to tell you the name of the friends who sent him. Talk with no one about it — and when you have told Wassili what the American says, go home to bed. If you give a true message to Wassili, you shall have fifty rubles more to-morrow."

"He will be drunk as an owl ten minutes after he gets to the Sofistkaya and the first vodka-shop," grumbled Michael.



—HALTED. BEFORE LONG THEY SAW A SENTRY FIRE, BUT THEY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO EVADE THE SOLDIERS

"God's blessing on you, mistress!" said Ilya, crossing himself twice. "I shall be very secret, and do as you have commanded—and I shall not drink."

"Who knows but what Zorogoff may come in the morning?" said Katerin to her father. "I have faith that God has saved us. If there be an American in the city, I shall go to him myself, if Ilya fails us."

"It is a trap," said Michael. "This is the ataman's work!"

He dropped his face into his arms upon the table, to conceal his dejection, for the hope that Katerin would be saved was once more destroyed within him.

Wassili lit his candle from the flame of the one burning on the table, and followed Ilya down the stairs.

"Hope is greater than fear, my father," said Katerin, and lifted his head to kiss him. "Who knows? By dawn we may be safe. We must pray!"

XII

WASSILI lurked in front of the sobrania from midnight till near morning, gossiping with droshky-drivers, and drinking tea in a little restaurant near by, where he could keep watch for Ilya.

Then, when he was ready to give up his waiting and return to Kirsakoff's house, he learned that Ilya had been shot by soldiers. From all Wassili could learn, Ilya had crossed an old garden to evade the sentries. Upon being challenged, he had started to run, and a volley brought him down. This had happened while Ilya was on the way to the Dauria Hotel from Michael's house; and it was rumored that he was a spy, and that a secret message had been found on his person.

So Wassili wandered home along toward dawn.

"Do you bring news?" asked Katerin, as Wassili went up to Michael to report.

Her heart sank as she saw disaster in Wassili's face.

"The Cossacks killed Ilya soon after he left here," was all that the servant could say. "The fool ran!"

"Then Ilya was bait for the ataman's trap for us," declared Michael. "There is no American—we are lost!"

"But there is an American, master," said Wassili.

"What?" demanded Michael, sitting up straight in his chair.

"It is truth, master."

"How do you know?" asked Katerin, grasping at this new straw.

"Rattle your tongue!" cried Michael.

"An istvostchik told me—a man whose father was in the Siberian Rifles with mine. He told me he drove an American from the station to the hotel, two days ago."

"Thanks to God!" exclaimed Katerin. "Then, though poor Ilya be dead, there is still hope for us—and perhaps he spoke the truth."

"It came about this way," continued Wassili. "I heard my friend boasting of having brought a rich American to the Dauria — an officer — who paid double in imperial rubles, not knowing what was the right fare."

Michael pondered over this news.

"It means no good for us," he said finally. "He may have sent Ilya, but why was Ilya shot? There is a trap in it."

"But if it is true that an American has come, Zorogoff will not dare persecute us," said Katerin. "Did you hear the name of this American, Wassili?"

"I know nothing more. I came back for the orders of excellence."

"And you did right, Wassili," said Katerin.

"Shall I go to the American. master?" asked the servant.

"Let me think," said Michael. "They killed Ilya, and they might kill you. We must be cautious. If it be true that an American has come, then Zorogoff will do one of two things—leave us in peace, or strike speedily. I wish I knew what we should do!"

"It is we who must strike," said Katerin.

"We must strike? What do you mean, my daughter?"

"Act at once—before the ataman."

"How?"

A look of determination came into Katerin's face.

"The time has come to be bold. Zorogoff will expect us to remain here, waiting his pleasure. If we act at once, we shall surprise him. We must go straight to the American officer!"

"What in the name of God are you saying?"

Michael turned in his chair and gazed at his daughter, aghast at her audacious suggestion.

"We must go to the hotel."

"Madness!" exclaimed Michael. "We should be shot down in the darkness—like Ilya Andreitch!"

"We shall go by the first daylight, when the sentries are being changed," insisted Katerin earnestly.

Michael stared at her as if he doubted her sanity, but Katerin did not waver in her determination.

"Daylight!" he cried. "That is sure death!"

"You know what Zorogoff said, my father. I shall not cross the threshold of that Mongol's palace alive. I prefer to chance death—and if we fail, we are with God. Better to die by the bullets of others than by our own hand."

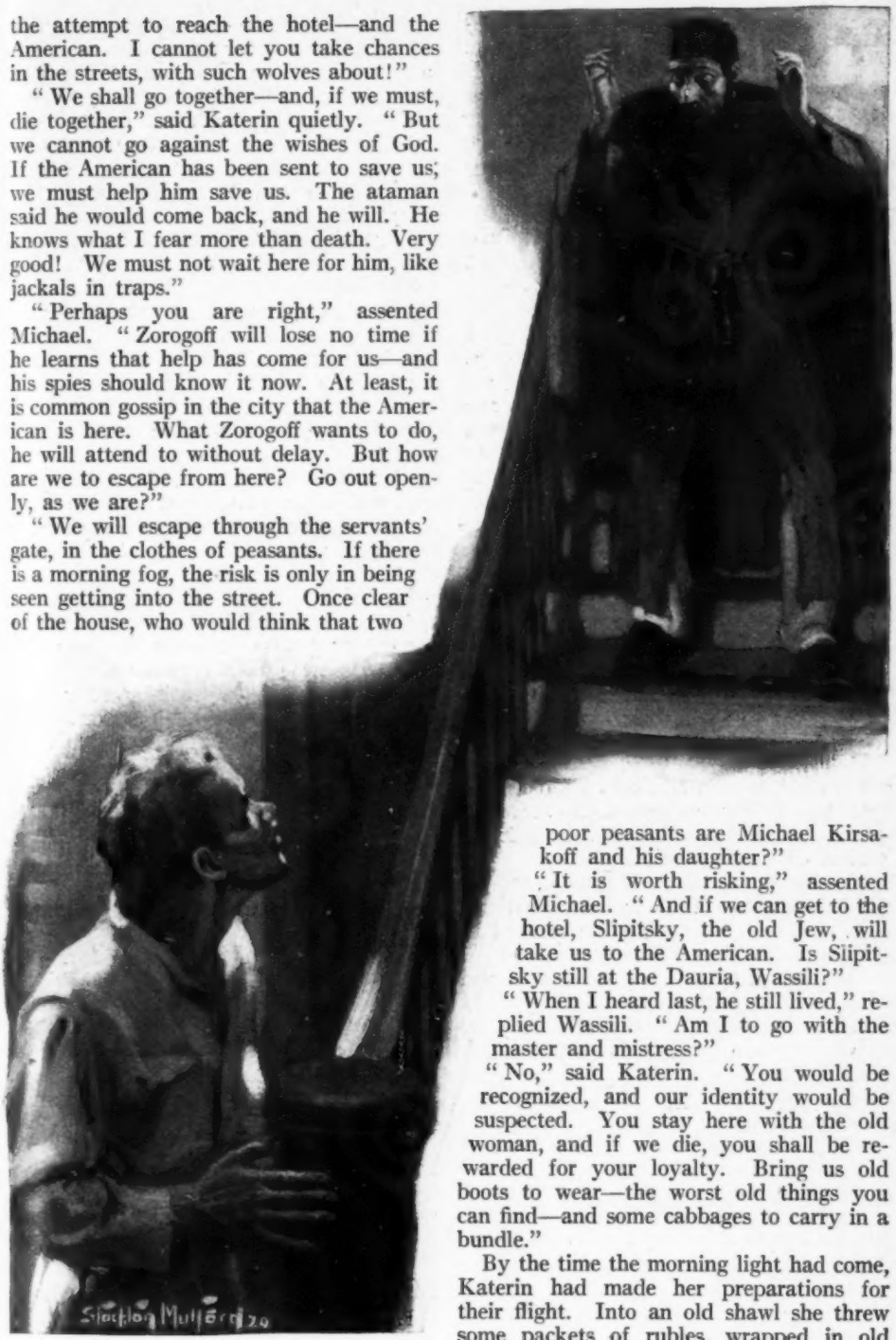
"Truth, by the holy saints!" cried Michael, giving the table a mighty thump with his fist. "But I am the one to make

the attempt to reach the hotel—and the American. I cannot let you take chances in the streets, with such wolves about!"

"We shall go together—and, if we must, die together," said Katerin quietly. "But we cannot go against the wishes of God. If the American has been sent to save us, we must help him save us. The ataman said he would come back, and he will. He knows what I fear more than death. Very good! We must not wait here for him, like jackals in traps."

"Perhaps you are right," assented Michael. "Zorogoff will lose no time if he learns that help has come for us—and his spies should know it now. At least, it is common gossip in the city that the American is here. What Zorogoff wants to do, he will attend to without delay. But how are we to escape from here? Go out openly, as we are?"

"We will escape through the servants' gate, in the clothes of peasants. If there is a morning fog, the risk is only in being seen getting into the street. Once clear of the house, who would think that two poor peasants are Michael Kirsakoff and his daughter?"



"THERE IS AN OLD PEASANT HERE TO PAY YOU MONEY," CALLED DAZO

"It is worth risking," assented Michael. "And if we can get to the hotel, Slipitsky, the old Jew, will take us to the American. Is Slipitsky still at the Dauria, Wassili?"

"When I heard last, he still lived," replied Wassili. "Am I to go with the master and mistress?"

"No," said Katerin. "You would be recognized, and our identity would be suspected. You stay here with the old woman, and if we die, you shall be rewarded for your loyalty. Bring us old boots to wear—the worst old things you can find—and some cabbages to carry in a bundle."

By the time the morning light had come, Katerin had made her preparations for their flight. Into an old shawl she threw some packets of rubles, wrapped in old paper; then her sable coat and other clothing, and, on top of all, three heads of cab-

bage. When the shawl was tied at the corners, the cabbages showed through the top.

A thick fog hid the sun, and they felt that they could get away from the house without being seen, unless the watch being kept was closer than they thought. When they were ready to depart, Michael put on the ancient gray coat—the one padded with paper rubles. He belted the shabby garment about him with an old rope, and dropped his secret pistol into a side pocket. A dirty old sheepskin cap covered his head, and a long muffler was wound about his neck and pulled over his face, so that he could see only through holes in the fabric.

Katerin wrapped her head in an old shawl, tied a raggy towel over her nose and chin, and got into a dirty and torn coat which had been mended with many faded patches. She wore a discarded pair of Wassili's boots, though she also took with her light shoes and slippers. When she picked up the bundle with the cabbages, she was a poor farmer's daughter, come in from the plains to sell her cabbages and buy salt and candles in the bazaar.

Before they set out, Wassili went into the street, and pottered with the casks about the small door, to see whether the house was being watched. He came back and reported that he could see no one.

Michael gave Wassili plenty of rubles to insure him and the serving woman having food, and it was understood that instructions would be sent if Michael and Katerin left the city with the American.

"God go with you," said Wassili, and he stood in the kitchen door with the old woman, who was crying, while the master and mistress slipped through the gate.

Thus two pretended peasants took to the street, and set out to get to the Dauria Hotel, seeking the American officer who, as they thought, had come to save them from Zorogoff.

XIII

MICHAEL and Katerin trudged stolidly through the dirty snow in the middle of the street, Michael in the lead, with his head bent against the cold in peasant style, and Katerin following with the bundle of cabbages.

They were apparently heedless of their surroundings, but they were really keeping a careful watch for anybody who might appear through the fog. Once they were clear of the house, they felt that they had a good chance of getting to the hotel without being halted, for they made no haste, but plodded along as if approaching the end of a long journey.

Before long they made out a sentry fire, but they made no attempt to evade passing the soldiers at a distance; instead, Michael bore straight for them, and when close, lifted his head to stare at them through the muffler about his face. He even gave them a good morning in gruff tones, and the sentries, thinking that the fugitives must have passed the outer cordons about the city and given a satisfactory account of themselves, let them pass.

As they drew in toward the city, they passed people who peered at them questioningly, and there were times when Michael felt sure that they were under suspicion of not being peasants. A band of roistering soldiers swung out of a side street and bore down upon them, the men tipsy after a night of drinking; but as they swarmed past they hailed Michael with pleasantries and went on about their business, not dreaming that the peasants were the former governor and his daughter.

Katerin struggled along, her bundle getting heavier every few yards, and her great boots tiring her as they slipped about where the snow was packed in the street; but she knew that her father could not help her, if they were to keep up their playing at peasants. Still, Michael slowed his pace, though he gave no apparent heed to his daughter.

They came to the church, and stopped a few minutes to pray and cross themselves. There were few people abroad, owing to the numbing, bitter cold.

"Have good heart," muttered Michael. "It is not far now."

"There is no difficulty," replied Katerin. "Only the boots make me slow. But do not hurry for my sake. Save yourself. I can go all day."

They passed the ruin of the great house in which they had made their home for years. Only one wall stood, black and charred, and penciled with white in crevices where the powdery snow had sifted in. The vacant windows yawned upon them, showing a background of drifting fog.

Soon they reached the upper end of the Sofistkaya, and moved down toward the big store which had been looted and stripped by revolutionists and exiles freed from the prison. The great windows along the street were boarded up.

They passed the wrecked bank, where Michael's partner had been slain in attempting to get the last of the money out. That, too, was boarded up, so that the empty building could not be used as a rifle-nest in case of another uprising against Zorogoff's troops.

There were more people about in the business district, and Michael and Katerin felt more secure from molestation. The hurrying pedestrians gave little attention to the two peasants, as they appeared to be, and such soldiers as they passed ceased to look at them at all.

So they reached the wooden bridge over the Ingoda, where they could see the front of the Dauria not far ahead. They went on, and soon were on the side of the street opposite to the hotel. Then, crossing the street in the middle of the block, after the fashion of people from the country, they approached the entrance.

Michael pushed open the door, elated that they had reached the place safely; but he knew they must still be cautious, for their identity might be more readily discovered by spies or possible enemies, once they were inside and under observation. If they did not find Slipitsky, the Jew proprietor, at once, they might not be able to keep their faces covered, and they might be scrutinized closely, and betrayed to some one who would carry the news of their arrival at the hotel to Zorogoff.

Katerin followed her father inside, and let her bundle drop to the floor. A sleepy-eyed youth, drowsing by a fire-reddened stove, roused himself and gave Michael and Katerin an angry look. He eyed the bundle which Katerin had put down, and then motioned them away.

"We want no cabbages," he said.

"I have come to pay Mr. Slipitsky the money I owe him," said Michael, with a bow.

The heat from the stove was oppressive after the cold of the streets, but Michael and Katerin made no move to uncover their faces.

"I will take the money," said the youth, holding out his hand, though he did not rise. "Slipitsky is not here."

"Not here—you mean he is gone away?"

"Not in," said the youth curtly.

"But he must sign the paper if I pay him," said Michael.

The youth got to his feet and looked at Michael closely, as if suspicious of his purpose. He also looked at Katerin, but she ignored him and stared at the dirty old posters hanging on the walls with pictures of Russian ships.

"Go away!" said the youth, and returned to his bench.

"But we have come twenty versts to see Mr. Slipitsky and give him the money," insisted Michael. "If we go back—"

A figure appeared at the top of the stairs, and called down sharply:

"Dazo!"

"I am here," answered the languid one.

"And is it a grand ball you are having down there, with all the talk, till I can't count figures? Who is come to talk with you? Maybe some rich gentlemen from Moscow, eh?"

Michael knew the man above for Slipitsky, and knew that now there was a good chance for safety.

"There is an old peasant here to pay you money," called Dazo.

"What? Somebody would be paying me money? You stupid goat! Is it money you would let slip away these days? I will be a poor man with you, stupid one!"

Michael did not wait, but started up the stairs, and Katerin followed him. Slipitsky remained standing in the dim light of the upper hall, peering down at them.

"Come this way to my office," he said, as they drew near to him. "You, Dazo! Keep the door shut, or we will be beggared with buying wood!"

Slipitsky trotted ahead into a tiny room, and was standing behind a desk when Michael and Katerin followed him into the room.

"You have come to pay me money?" he asked, a trifle suspiciously.

Slipitsky was an old man himself, with long gray whiskers, a grave face, and small black eyes that seized rather than looked at a thing, so piercing were they. He wore a round black cap on his head, and about his shoulders was a long black cape, tied in at the middle with a green cord which had ended its usefulness as a curtain-cord. His brow was furrowed with deep wrinkles, and he had no teeth, but his face had a benevolent expression, and a wrinkled little ghost of a smile lurked about his eyes.

"Yes, we have come," said Michael, and turned and closed the door behind Katerin.

"What now?" demanded Slipitsky, with a frightened look, glancing hastily at Katerin and back at Michael.

"We wish to have a talk with you privately," said Michael, in a whisper.

Slipitsky's face took on a blank stare, and his jaw dropped. He drew back into the corner, in something of a panic.

"You are not peasants!" he mumbled. "You do not speak like a peasant now. I am tricked! Who has sent—"

Michael whipped off the muffler about his neck and face by way of answer, and stepped into the light from the window, thrusting out his face so that Slipitsky might see him.

"Prophets of Israel! You are dead!" whispered Slipitsky.

"Not yet," said Michael. "And Katerin Stephanovna has come with me. You must hide us!"

"Michael Alexandrovitch!" whispered Slipitsky, crouching in the corner, and putting his hands over his ears. "They told me you were dead! Four months ago I heard you had been killed! Is it that you have risen from the dead?"

"Take care, or you will be heard!" warned Michael. "No one must know we are here, or Zorogoff—"

The Jew ran out from behind the desk and shot the bolt on the door. Then he turned to them, threw up his hands in terror, and whispered:

"True! The place is like a beehive with spies! That rascal below is one. The Cossacks made me hire him—he is an underground for the ataman."

"But we must stay," said Michael, beginning to be alarmed lest the Jew might turn them out into the street again, for Slipitsky seemed beside himself with terror.

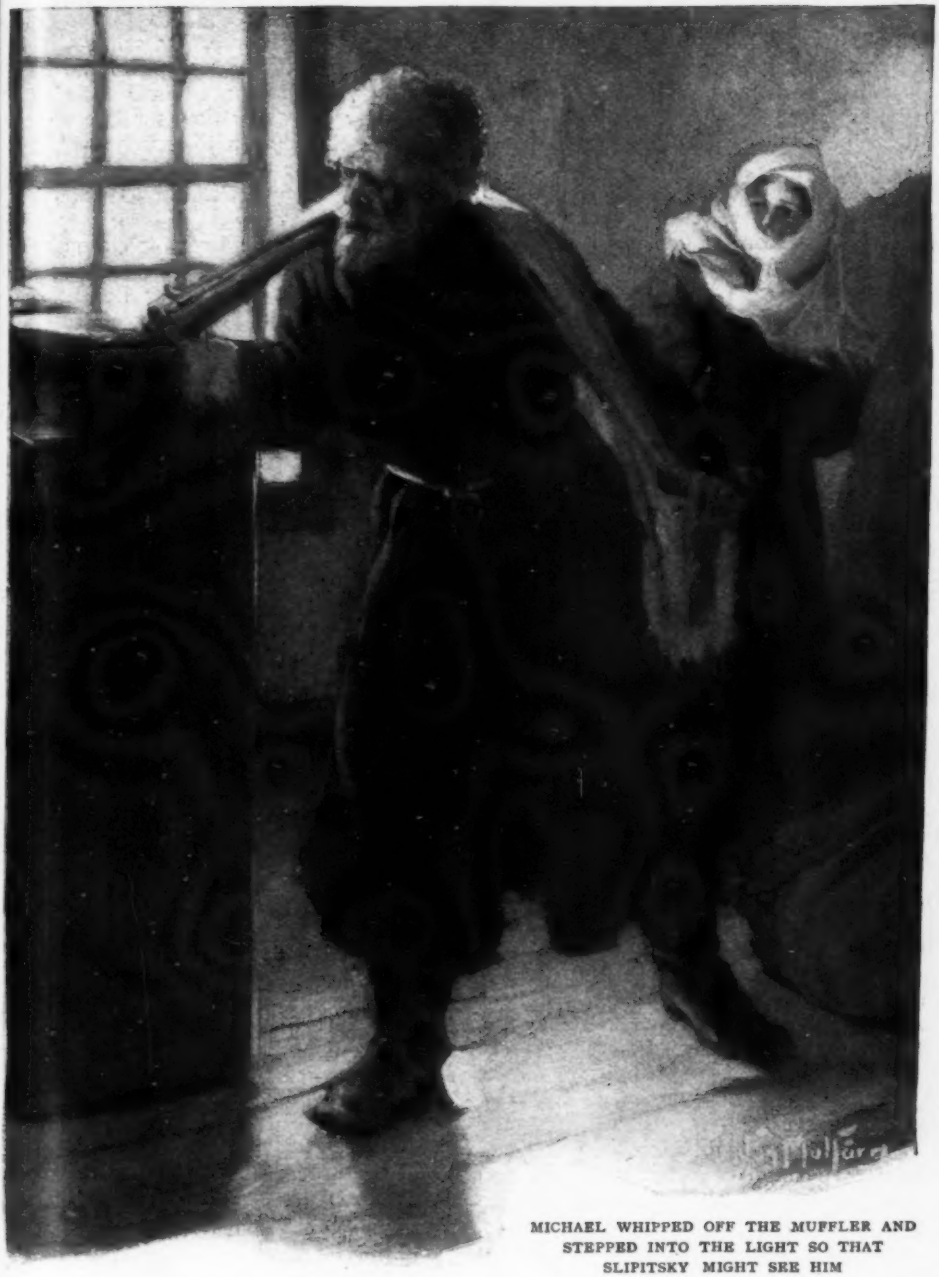
"Please, you must hide us!" pleaded Katerin. "If you do not help us, Zorogoff will—"

"We shall all be killed!" whispered Slipitsky. "Take off your cloth, mistress, and let me see the face of Katerin Stephanovna. Ah, yes, it is thou!"

"And you will hide us?" begged Katerin.

"We are desperate," said Michael. "Zorogoff has been persecuting us. If he finds us now, we are lost, old friend!"

"Toosh!" said Slipitsky. "I have known persecution in my day—who of my people have not? And you were good in your time to some of my friends. True, I will hide you as well as I can; but if Zorogoff knows—ah, then we are all dead—as dead as the prophets! That ataman is a robber, excellence! Every week I must



MICHAEL WHIPPED OFF THE MUFFLER AND STEPPED INTO THE LIGHT SO THAT SLIPITSKY MIGHT SEE HIM

pay him taxes till I am on the verge of utter beggary! Taxes, he calls it! Is the last copeck from a business man taxes? Every name in the book he watches for fear I would have a stranger in who might be a spy against him. And that dog of a Dazo below stairs! It is he who is the ataman's eyes!"

"And he saw us come in," said Katerin. "Will he know who—"

"Toosh! Who is to suspect that the two peasants who came in this morning

were his excellence the general and his daughter? It is how to get you out that has me worrying. You must be put in rooms, and no name in the book. We must fool that young one below. Wait!"

The Jew unlocked the door cautiously, and looked out into the hall. Then he closed it behind him, went carefully out to the head of the stairs, and looked down. Dazo was lying on the bench with his back to the stove.

"Dazo! Dazo!" yelled Slipitsky frantically. "Dazo! They have gone! Stop the two!"

"What is that?" called Dazo, rolling off the bench and looking about him stupidly.

"Do not let them get away!"

"Who is it?"

"The two old peasants! They with the cabbages, who came to pay me money! Stop them, or I am ruined!"

"I saw no one," said Dazo.

"I am a ruined man!" wailed Slipitsky, wringing his hands. "I signed the receipt, but the rubles they paid me were bad! They just went out by the door. Run!"

"But no one has gone out," insisted Dazo, reaching for his coat on a hook.

"You stupid goat! Hurry up the street after them! Run, or I am out twenty rubles!"

Dazo pulled on his coat and dashed out into the street.

Slipitsky hurried back to his office.

"Come!" he called in a low tone. "I will put you in rooms."

Michael and Katerin followed him down the hall. Slipping a key into a lock, the Jew opened the door and thrust them in, handing the key to Michael.

Slipitsky hurried away, and Michael locked the door.

"Safe!" cried Katerin. "My father, we are safe—for the present, at any rate. Oh, thank God!"

"And the American will save you," said Michael, as he drew Katerin to him and smiled at her fondly. "Now it is a time for joy, not tears. Come, pull off my boots, and I shall sleep at last, knowing you are safe."

XIV

A COUPLE of hours after Michael turned the key in the lock, Slipitsky returned to the room in which he had hidden the Kirsakoffs. He brought a samovar, some bread, a cold partridge, and a bottle of wine.

"You need something to warm you and hearten you, excellence," he said. "Your danger is not over because you are here. Zorogoff may make a demand for all my vacant rooms at any time for his officers; or he may send men to search the place. So tell me, have you a plan for the underground—to get out of Chita? That is dangerous, too."

The old general had gone to sleep almost at once, for he was worn out waiting and watching for Ilya the night before. He now sat on the bed, his boots off, and his eyes still blinking at being roused by the return of the Jew.

"Friends have sent an American officer for us," said Katerin in low tones. "He is here in the hotel—is it not true?"

She gave her father a glass of wine, and then turned to Slipitsky.

"The American!" he whispered, amazed at what she had said. "Is it you he has come for? Yes, I have heard, but I have not seen him."

Slipitsky sat pulling his beard, deep in thought.

"The American will take us away from Chita," said Michael, when he had drunk the wine. "Zorogoff will not dare interfere with him."

"Who knows?" asked the Jew. "It is hard for me to tell what that devil will do, but it is good that your friends have done this. So the American told you to come here?"

"We heard he was in the city looking for us," said Katerin. "Ilya Andreitch, a peasant, came to our house last night and told us—and then he was killed coming over here. That is why we escaped this morning."

"Then the American sent word to you by Ilya Andreitch?" asked Slipitsky. He still seemed puzzled and troubled. "Dazo did not say the American was seeking any one—and if I did not know where to find you, how did the American find Ilya to send you the word—and why should Ilya be killed?"

"Ilya got it from Rimsky, an old cigarette-seller," said Katerin. "That was why Ilya came to us. And the sentries shot him. He was coming to the hotel here with a message to the American, asking who had sent him to us."

Slipitsky looked still more worried.

"Rimsky! That old liar! He will say anything for ten copecks! What does he

know about the American? Is it that Rimsky is a spy?"

Katerin began to feel alarmed at Slipitsky's doubt. The old Jew showed plainly enough that there was something about the whole business which bothered him, without his knowing exactly what. He was reluctant to question Katerin too closely, thinking she had a purpose in not giving him a more complete explanation of the affair.

For the first time since she had listened to Ilya, she had to admit that there was no proof that the American had come for her father and her, other than what Ilya had said on Rimsky's authority.

"But if the American officer asked Rimsky for us? How else could Ilya know?" demanded Michael, frowning thoughtfully. Then he became wary. "Ah! If Ilya was deceived, and Rimsky is spying on us, as you say!"

Katerin laughed. She was afraid that her father would fall once more into dejected spirits, suspecting everybody, and wearing himself out with worries for which no reason existed, now that an American was in the city—under the same roof with them. At least, Zorogoff would not dare persecute them openly.

"Go to the American officer," she said to Slipitsky. "Tell him you know where the Kirsakoffs are. He will tell you at once whether or not he seeks us."

"I am not so sure," said Slipitsky. "The owl says little but thinks much, and what he knows is his own. We have no need to fear the American—I wish there were more of them here—but this old rascal of a Rimsky! It would be well to know what he is up to."

"True!" said Michael Kirsakoff. "Why should we run to a stranger and tell him who we are, till we have learned whether he wants us?"

"Yes, the wolf knows the forest," said the Jew. "That is wisdom, and there is no tax on wisdom. First we must question Rimsky."

"No," said Katerin. "You say you do not trust Rimsky; that he is a liar, and may be a spy. If the American asked Rimsky for us, he may lie about it—and even if he tells the truth, we shall mistrust what he tells us. If you ask him if the American asked for us, that will set his tongue wagging, to whom we do not know. And the American may not want it known that he seeks us; our friends would tell him to be cautious."

"Then shall I ask the American, mistress?" Slipitsky inquired.

"No, thank you, old friend, I shall see him myself."

"See him?" said Michael. "You will go to him and tell him who we are? Take care, my daughter! We can trust no one!"

"I shall not tell him who I am, unless he knows," said Katerin. "If he has come seeking Michael Kirsakoff and his daughter, he will have descriptions of us."

"True," said Michael. "Our friends would tell him, so that he would be able to recognize us."

"That is wisdom," assented the Jew. "Test the ice before we walk upon it."

"Where is the American's room?" asked Katerin.

"Down at the end of the hall—the other way."

"Are there rooms near him which are vacant?"

"Yes, and I can put you in them. You mean you will watch him?"

"That would tell us nothing," said Michael.

"Have you a servant you can trust?" went on Katerin.

"Yes, mistress—a sister of my cousin. She can be trusted. It is she who will bring you your food and samovars."

"Then, if you put us near the American officer, let the girl bring his samovar to us when he rings for one—and I shall take it to the American—I shall be his samovar girl."

"What? Can you think of such a thing? A Kirsakoff a servant!"

Michael was horrified at the idea, but Katerin laughed gaily.

"Who can help the Kirsakoffs better than God and themselves? What harm can come of it? Is it not wise to be known as a servant? Are we not here as peasants? Look at my old black dress! I have my slippers on—I can let down my hair—and how is the American to know that I am not a samovar girl?"

"And what then?" asked Michael, with a frown. "Do you think the American will tell every samovar girl his business?"

"Ah, no!" said the Jew. "He will know at once that you are not a servant, Katerin Stephanovna."

"True, he may know that. If he is looking for the Kirsakoffs, he may know

who I am. If he does not recognize me, and yet knows me for a woman not of the servant class, all the more reason why he should ask me whether I know the Kirsakoffs. Why should he not ask a samovar girl, if he will ask old Rimsky for the general who was once governor here? And do you think I will only take him his food and run away?"

"And what else can you do?" asked her father.

"I shall talk to him. If he does not tell me why he has come to Chita, then I shall try and learn. Can he speak Russian well, do you think, Slipitsky?"

"He must," said the Jew. "He is alone—and he talked with Dazo, who knows nothing but Russian. But the American wrote in the book in English—I could not read the name."

"Then, if he talked with Dazo and Rimsky, he surely can talk with me."

"By the prophets! Katerin Stephanovna should be in the secret police, your excellency!"

"We had better wait till we see what we shall know," said Michael, as he lit a cigarette, not too sure that Katerin was following a wise course. "I wish there were some other way."

"This is the safest," insisted Katerin. "We cannot delay, and we cannot take outsiders like Rimsky into our confidence. Our safety now depends upon keeping secret where we are. We shall pay you well for what you have done, old friend!"

"Ah, it is not for money," said the Jew. "But as you say, there is little time to lose. And when do you begin playing at being a samovar girl, mistress?"

"The morning is best," said Katerin. "Instruct the girl that she is to bring the samovar to me when the American officer rings in the morning. Then I shall go in with it, and we shall see what I can learn. And we must be taken to the rooms near the American. It would be safer if Zorogoff's men should come after us—we could appeal to the American for protection. I do not fear him."

"True," said Michael. "Why should we fear an American? If he seeks us, he will know you—and that means that he is from friends. If he does not know you, how can he tell any one the Kirsakoffs are here in the hotel? You must have a good sleep first, my daughter, before you begin with him."

Late in the afternoon Slipitsky put Michael and Katerin into two rooms joined by a door in which hung green curtains. One of the rooms was next to the one in which Peter Gordon was resting and planning how he should deal with Michael Kirsakoff when the former governor should be found.

(*To be continued in the May number of* MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

THE CLOISONNÉ VASE

I HAVE a vase from old Japan,
A cloisonné,
Which should appeal to any man
Who loves the play
Of blue and green which must have been
Borrowed from sky and sea.
Whether or no, the vase is gay,
And it appeals to me.

And from it now rise sprig and spray
Of yellow stars
And velvet buds of silver-gray;
Beyond Sangar's
Straits am I borne, beyond the Horn,
Beyond the nipping poles,
My vase a ship whose living spars
Have sun and moon for goals!

Richard Butler Glaenzer

Something by Romeo

BY T. E. HOLLOWAY

Illustrated by Marshall Frantz

FREE of feminine restraint, very much the untrammeled male, he was almost forgetting why he had come to the show alone. His repulse still rankled, when he recalled it. "Some other time," she had said, scorning his invitation because "friends of the family" were coming to play cards.

"Friends of the family"—probably fat old Dr. Huggins and waddling Mrs. Huggins and their gawky son, Elmer. If Rose Gilmore had turned him down for Elmer Huggins, he was through with her for good and all, that was all there was to it. If she really had no more judgment of men than that—

Moodily he jingled the small change in his trousers pocket. Those nickels and dimes, saved from his allowance by scant lunches of sinkers for more than a week, represented the most poignant sacrifices of high-school youth. The theater, and ice-cream afterward—she wasn't worth it. No woman was worth it!

Gradually his lacerated feelings were soothed by the excitement of being in a "real theater," not just a movie, and by the thrill of occupying a box seat for some unaccountable reason, when he had merely asked for the best fifty-cent seat in the house. He still seemed to be weighed down with a cynical knowledge of the world, but underneath this pose he was enjoying himself immensely.

He hoped some one would recognize him sitting in the box—one of the front ones it was, and almost on the stage; but by concentrated will-power he kept himself from looking around at the audience, and fixed a moody gaze at the curtain. He had seen this curtain before, with its woodland scene surrounded by squares of local advertisements, and it held no interest for him; but he stared at it, nevertheless, for ten minutes. Then the orchestra assembled, five musicians strong, and the curtain ascended slowly, to reveal the beach of a seaside resort with breakers dashing high on the back drop.

Man of the world though he was, he could not restrain a muttered "Golly, this is the life!" as the chorus, in Annette Kellermann bathing-suits of giddy stripes and spots, sidestepped from the wings. "Tabloid musical comedy," in the phrase of the *Morning Herald* critic, was on the bill for the evening. It was "small-town stuff," of course, but to Raymond Dorsey it represented the world, the flesh, and the devil, and he expanded in the resultant glow of sophistication.

His expression was blasé and world-wearied as he stared boldly at the row of girls.

"Not half bad—that girl second from the right," he muttered to himself, and glowed inwardly at his ability to rise to the occasion in the choice of his phrase.

"Not half bad"—that sounded well. He had picked up the expression from his cousin just back from a freshman year at college. He repeated the phrase under his breath over and over as he watched the stage. It formed a sort of undertone of worldliness for his enjoyment.

The chorus-girl he had picked out in the fulness of his worldly wisdom as a seemly female—"some baby," in his ordinary diction—was also the choice of the manager, and a general favorite. She had the lead in the "song hits" that bolstered up the flimsy plot, and her performance was greeted with unfailing approval. In an interval when the leading actors had unaccountably deserted the stage, leaving the plot quite in abeyance, she danced on—the other girls a swaying, rhythmic background—and sang "Just You."

Clapping and whistling and the scraping of feet on the floor brought her back for an

encore. She blew kisses to the audience and bowed her thanks, but the noise kept up. Raymond had forgotten his world-weariness in the heat of his enthusiasm. He was whistling and clapping and stamping his feet like other schoolboys in the audience; but his individual racket stopped very suddenly. The girl was dancing across the stage toward him. Her eyes had singled him out. She was singing to him!

Blushes rose in hot waves and seemed to pass up over his neck and his cheeks and into the roots of his hair. His eyes set in terror. Why had he taken that box seat?

The astute manager could have answered that question. Finding the boxes of the Cozy Theater hard to fill at prices above those of the rest of the house, he had reduced them to the general level, and had given instructions to the ticket-seller to fill them with boys like Raymond, who might be counted on to add to the general entertainment and enthusiasm.

Such a cold business arrangement was beyond Raymond's conception, however. Fate had placed him there, and the girl had seen him and was singing to him — to

THE AUDIENCE ROCKED AND ROARED IN UTTER ABANDON. ROMEO RECALLED HIS SPEECH AND WENT ON

him alone. The spot-light followed her—and embraced him, too, as she swayed nearer the box. He longed to do something to show her that he understood, but he could only sit rigid, his jaw slightly dropped, under the amused gaze of the audience, his blushes rivaling the scarlet of his tie.

"And I'll tell you something that's awfully true—I There's only one fellow I love—and that's you!"

The spectators rocked with delicious amusement, but Raymond had forgotten them. Emotion had usurped the place of thought. The girl was singing to him alone!

II

BETWEEN stanzas she danced with a snappy vitality, her black satin bathing-suit not inimical to the display of a pair of comely legs. Her white shoulders swayed and shimmied at him. Her ingénue's blue eyes gazed at him wistfully, even while her sprightly feet in black bathing-slippers kept up a ceaseless patter, but poorly seconded by the rest of the chorus dancing unobtrusively behind her.

Raymond watched her, fascinated at the romance of it all. Then his terror and his self-consciousness returned. She was dancing nearer. His rigor increased and his jaw fell again. Dancing unfalteringly, her eyes holding his, she swayed toward him, leaned a little closer — and chucked him under the chin! The audience howled. A masculine voice yelled, "Oh, Boy!"

The balloon of his romance was pricked. She had been laughing at him. The song ended, and the attention of the audience drifted from Raymond's corner, following the girl.

She was recalled again by louder whistling, clapping, and catcalls from boys like Raymond, but this time he was silent. Divided between hope and fear, he wondered whether she would sing to him again.

But this time the spot-light avoided him. She danced and sang to another youth, who sat in the first row. Raymond, relieved and breathing freely once more, was conscious of a feeling, not quite of jealousy, but of slight.

When the song was over, he derived comfort from the thought that at any rate she hadn't chucked the other boy under the chin. He was blissfully unconscious that the reason for the omission was that it was humanly impossible for her to reach so far.

The thread of the plot was taken up, only to be dropped again and again for other musical interpolations. No one, the girl least of all, was any longer thinking of Raymond, but he still blushed fitfully. When the curtain fell and the lights blinked out for the moving pictures, he felt as if a tight band had been unwound from his chest.

He could think now of all it had meant to him and the girl. Rose Gilmore and her "friends of the family" were forgotten. He was in love with a chorus-girl! The realization brought to him again that delicious feeling of sophistication which had been his before he had ever heard "Just You."

Having thought in his limited way of Rose and no other, he was now so possessed by the fascination of the girl of the footlights that Rose was scarcely a memory, hardly more than a stranger he had passed in the street. It is only in extreme youth that such a transition from love to love passes unnoticed.

Through the course of a five-reel picture he thought only of the girl, and of different schemes of bringing himself again to her attention. The next time he saw her she must be made to realize what he really was —a man to be respected and feared.

Overflowing with novel though vague aspirations, he was about to leave the theater when an actor came upon the stage and halted him and many others with a request for a moment's attention.

"One moment," this person began. "I want to announce that, in response to many requests, we have decided to have an amateur night every Friday. This performance by the budding genius of your city will take the place of the motion-picture at the end of the regular performance; and to the most popular amateur, every Friday night, a valuable prize will be given. Every facility will be offered to make each speech or song a success. The orchestra will render any music requested. We will get out an American flag and wave it if there is any lack of applause, and any suspicious characters who endeavor to enter bearing cabbages, turnips, or eggs, will be disarmed at the door. The amateurs will have everything in their favor and nothing to fear. Take the message to your friends who are theatrically inclined. They will have no better opportunity than this—under the auspices of a company which has met with

such universal success. And remember that prizes, valuable prizes, will be given to the best performers. I thank you!"

A scattered clapping amid the bustle of departure, and Raymond found himself in the street. The actor's announcement had crystallized his vague longings. He would make a hit on amateur night and glorify himself in the eyes of his chorus-girl.

The fact that he had never been interested in dramatics, that the recitations at school had always filled him with loathing, counted nothing with him now. He was at that happy period of youth in which success in any particular field means nothing more than choosing the field.

He had often debated whether to be a great general, a captain of industry, or a world-famed inventor. Sometimes he preferred the position of commander-in-chief of the army; in other moods he was inclined to choose millions and a luxurious office in the Woolworth Building, in New York. The career of a second Thomas Edison had its attractions, too. It was simply a matter of selecting the army, business, or invention as a career.

Now it was the stage that was to be distinguished by his presence. He fancied himself the prominent actor of the century. His name should go down the ages, known to all, a household word for untold generations. The name of the actress who had inspired his choice should be remembered because of him.

The realization that he did not know her name woke him from his dreams; but that trifling lack of information did not stop the sweep of his fancy for long. As he turned into his own block, shadowy under the trees after he had passed the arc-lit corner, his fancy soared again to his probable salary—fifty thousand a year. He looked about him uneasily at the thought of so valuable a life exposed to the dangers of the night in so gloomy a spot.

At his gate he stopped to estimate the amount of the "valuable prize" to be awarded on amateur night. A probable dollar or two did not seem ridiculous to him in contrast to the goodly sums that had filled his mind a few minutes before. His fancy even condescended to picture a dollar's worth of ice-cream sodas.

III

THE first amateur night came and went undistinguished by the first appearance of the greatest actor of the age, Raymond Dorsey. He was not quite ready, but he attended as a spectator and condescending critic, and laughed heartily at the boys and girls "who thought they could act and came out on the stage and made fools of themselves."

Prizes for that! Why, it wasn't acting at all—just squeaky recitations and songs in high, weak voices. As for the dancing, it was rotten. He would show them! In his glow of pleasant anticipation he even fancied that the audience might mistake him for one of the regular actors.

The sight of his chorus-girl again, dressed this time as a little maid in short skirts that suggested rather than revealed, put him in an amorous frame of mind which lasted until his return home. He was still in the arms of love, as it were, when he noticed a gift copy of "Romeo and Juliet" on the parlor table. He picked it up and began to run through it in the hope of finding something suited both to the Cozy Theater and to his feeling of affection for his lady of the stage—something more appropriate than anything he had found in his school edition of famous orations.

Ah, he had it—*Romeo's* soliloquy under *Juliet's* window!

Unmindful of his surroundings, he began walking about the room declaiming the lines in a voice which he unconsciously allowed to grow louder and louder. The family, consisting of his parents and a younger brother and sister, were drawn from various parts of the house by the unaccustomed uproar, and assembled in the front hall. They stared amazedly into the parlor, his father in his shirt-sleeves with the evening paper, his mother with her sewing, and the children with their playthings. They formed an attentive audience. He shouted on without noticing them:

"It is my lady—oh, it is my love!
Oh, that she knew she were!
She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business—"

Meeting at last the stares of the impromptu audience, he stammered and turned fiery red.

"Go on, go on," his father encouraged him.

"Don't mind us," his mother said kindly. "We only came to see what was happening."

But his brother and sister giggled, and he turned and fled through the open window to the porch, and then over the railing to the dark yard below. Even there his ears caught the laughter of the children, quickly silenced by his mother.

How he hated those children! He sat down fuming in the rope swing, hung in shadow from the limb of a large oak-tree. Still burning with mortification and resentment, he was thankful for the concealing darkness.

Determined, however, to go on with his undertaking, since he had found a selection fitted to the peculiar circumstances, he spent all of his spare time—and most of his time came under that heading—in memorizing the chosen passage and declaiming it, in places he deemed secure from family interruption.

Another amateur night came and passed without his being quite ready, so perfect had he planned his performance to be; but at last the fateful evening came. He betook himself to the Cozy Theater alone, his project unknown to any save himself. He was not accustomed to taking the family into his confidence; and as for Rose Gilmore next door, she had long since been relegated to the limbo of forgotten loves. If he had had more experience or less self-confidence, he might have tried to "salt" the audience—as they salt fake mines with nuggets—with friends who might be counted on to applaud his act; but such an expedient never occurred to him.

He applied at the box-office, according to instructions, and was sent around to the stage door. Trembling with his first attack of stage fright, he passed through the mysterious portal into a new region of dressing-rooms and scenery.

IV

THE old negro doorkeeper, on learning Raymond's purpose, grinned without comment and led him to a corner of the wings where the amateurs would be less underfoot than any place else.

The other amateurs had already gathered—a boy in knee-trousers, two little girls, mere beribboned infants, and a wee boy costumed like a soldier in khaki. They were accompanied by fussy mothers and aunts. It was the youngest group of amateurs the Cozy Theater had ever featured.

The professionals, at first, took no notice of this group of children. The curtain was about to go up. The orchestra was playing, and the chorus-girls stood ready to start madly on the opening song and dance. Raymond gazed soulfully at the girl of his choice. He looked so long and fixedly that her attention was snared. She tossed him an amused glance.

"Look what she's caught now!"

One of the other girls had seen him too, and twelve mocking chorus eyes, set in six painted and powdered faces, stared at him. Raymond wanted to sink down, down, down, or dissolve into the surrounding atmosphere. Why had he come? Even the girl of his dreams was laughing with the others.

"Robbin' the cradle, huh?" a frizzy-haired blonde commented. "She ketches 'em young!"

"Ketches 'em goin' and comin'," a scene-shifter chuckled.

Raymond shrank into himself at these thrusts. What he felt most was the realization that the girl of whom he had dreamed exclusively for three weeks had forgotten him—forgotten that her soft fingers had ever chucked him under the chin. The realization broadened and grew more devastating at the thought that probably she had never noticed him at all; that he had been no more to her than a masculine being seated in a convenient place, her advances only a trick for bringing forth a laugh.

An age of misery, and the curtain floated upward. He breathed more freely now that he was relieved from the concerted stares of the chorus, but his relief was short-lived. The thought of his own share in the evening's entertainment brought on a cold perspiration to succeed his hot blushing. He mopped his face miserably, yet, curiously, the thought of leaving the theater before his turn did not occur to him. To his mind the coming ordeal was something wholly inevitable.

But for the misery that consumed him, he would have enjoyed the novelty of seeing a performance from the wings. Even as it was, he thought the comedy even better than usual, and wished that he could enjoy it to the full. The bluish-black-haired Hawaiian picked strangely haunting sounds from a ukelele. The old comedian was never more brilliant in his witticisms. The thread of story in the tabloid drama was interesting; and he had never seen his girl of the chorus dance so alluringly, the

silver buckles on her slippers like winking points of light.

The full tide of his misery returned when he watched the one girl sing to yet another male who sat in the same box next the stage that he had occupied on the other great night. "Shamelessness," he called it, when he saw her chuck this other fellow under the chin.

The comedy came to an end. The actors took their curtain-calls, and then the comedian who played youthful parts, but who was really not so young himself, stepped forward and announced the amateurs. A rustle through the audience indicated that friends of those little boys and girls were getting ready to applaud.

"I will now introduce"—the professional had ushered a small beruffled girl to the center of the stage—"little Ireline Lang, who will give a song and dance."

Little Ireline sang in a squeaky voice and danced woodenly.

"How cute!" feminine voices exclaimed through the audience.

The small boy in khaki and the other little girl followed. Raymond watched their performance with disgust, which was more for himself than for them. The boy in knee-trousers, following with an extensive repertoire of popular songs, aroused enthusiasm in comparison. He was even showered with nickels and dimes by the relieved audience.

Raymond, now, was the only amateur left. In the wings, the old comedian asked him about the nature of his offering. Raymond licked his dry lips and muttered that he would recite "something by *Romeo*." The actor assumed a mien of grave import as he escorted Raymond to the front of the stage.

"It is now my unexpected privilege to present to this cultured audience the young Shakespearian actor, Raymond Dorsey, who will recite"—he turned to Raymond to bow ceremonially—"'Something by *Romeo*.'"

V

THE audience sat up in joyous anticipation. Raymond stepped forward to begin, assuming the pose he had planned—one foot slightly in advance; but in the heat of the moment he had stepped out too far with his right foot, which gave to his left the appearance of dragging in the rear. A titter rose and spread over the house.

"'It is my lady,'" he began unexpectedly in a sort of bleat. "'Oh, it is my love!'"

Here, realizing that his position was awkward, and even a little unsafe as regards balance, he brought his left foot up to his right, and then took a short step forward with his right to get into his pose again. The titter became ripples of infectious laughter. He was a most entertaining *Romeo* as he stood there—long-legged, one trouser-leg hitched up, arms dangling, sandy hair damply matted on his forehead. He mopped his face with a handkerchief, slightly soiled, and began again with a gasp:

> "It is my lady—oh, it is my love!
> Oh, that she knew she were!"

The tide of laughter rose again, and he realized that he was going too fast. He began to mouth his words and give full value to all the final consonants, the result being a series of snappy explosions.

> "She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
> Her eye discourses; I will answer it—it—it—"

The audience rocked and roared in utter abandon. *Romeo* recalled his speech and went on.

> "I am too bold—'tis not to me she speaks.
> Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their spheres till they return."

He had relapsed into a sort of chant. The merriment, which had subsided a trifle, now began on the crescendo again. The chorus-girl, who had guessed that she was more or less the subject of this effusion, had appeared at one side of the stage. With one finger in her mouth, she stood in an attitude of youthful shyness that convulsed the audience. Raymond, knowing nothing of all this, went on bravely:

> "What if her eyes were there, they in her head?"

Here the girl roguishly winked an eye in his direction, and the audience stood up and howled. Raymond, realizing at last that his performance was being embellished, turned toward her. She extended her arms to him yearningly. Vanished from his memory were the remaining lines "by *Romeo*." He knew only that the whole world, and the girl included, were united in mocking him.

He fled. Never did he know how he got out of the theater, past the laughing groups of professionals in the wings, past the old negro doorkeeper now doubled up in mirth, through the stage door and out into the street.

VI

AT first he rushed on wildly, pounding up one street and down another, heedless

"HERE'S YOUR PRIZE. YES, TAKE IT. THAT WAS THE BIGGEST HIT THE COZY EVER HAD"

of his surroundings, the hot blood surging through his body in succeeding waves of embarrassment. He dwelt on one miserable incident after another; but at last, cooled by the night air, he slowed down, and, wandering aimlessly, he reviewed the whole experience more calmly.

Gradually he began to wonder a little about the "valuable prize." It had probably gone to the boy in knee-trousers. Raymond felt another pang of disappointment. Nothing ever came his way! He felt this monetary loss as keenly as if it had been the fifty-thousand-dollar salary of his dreams. As for the whole wretched affair, he only hoped that no one he knew had been at the Cozy Theater.

He avoided every one next day, but late in the afternoon, as he was nearing home, he saw Rose Gilmore at her front gate.

"Hello, Raymond! Where have you been all day?"

"Oh, nowhere," he answered, attempting to pass on indifferently.

"Because a man has just been to your house looking for you."

"He has?"

Raymond's curiosity was aroused, and he waited to hear the rest.

"Yes, and I heard him tell your mother he was from the Cozy Theater."

Raymond wondered if he had understood aright.

"It's a nice little theater, isn't it? I've been there several times, but I've always missed amateur night. They say they're good, too."

"Oh, I don't know," Raymond remarked loftily, gaining confidence with the knowledge that she knew nothing of his terrible failure. "Nice for those that like 'em, maybe."

"Why, here the man is, now."

It was the old comedian. He had seen Raymond, and was coming toward them.

"Hello, young man!" the actor said kindly. "You ran away last night. If you hadn't been so well known, we never could have found out where you lived. Here's your prize. Yes, take it. That was the biggest hit the Cozy ever had."

Raymond stared dumbly at the new five-dollar bill in his hand.

"Th-thanks," he stammered.

"Come and try again another time. Always glad to see you. So-long!"

The old comedian swung up the street, whistling.

"Why, Raymond, I didn't know that you had acted on amateur night!"

"Oh, I—I did my bit. I just happened to be there, you know, an' I just thought I might have a try, so I went up on the stage—"

"And gave a recitation?"

"Wasn't much."

"But just think, getting five dollars like that!"

"Oh, that's nothing," grandly. "Come on, Rose, let's get an ice-cream soda!"

APRIL

I COME—behold me, love-child of the sun.
From out the brown earth's womb I leap,
A sportive nymph with slender limbs,
And eyes that flash and gleam,
And wind-blown hair.

The fairies fashion me o'ernight
A wonder robe of tender green
Bejeweled thick with yellow stars.
I dance, I sing,
I mime the sunbeams,
And the skies are blue—deep blue!

Cold, ghostly, gray-cowled monks
Look on my sport askance and turn away.
I touch the naked branches of the trees—
A myriad trembling blossoms burst their buds
To kiss my teasing finger-tips,
To live their little day and die of love
And beat their wings upon the greening sod.

I dance, I sing,
I laugh—and lo, a mystic urge
Constrains the heart of every living thing
To love!

I dance, I sing,
And then, all suddenly—I know not why—
I weep!

Lachlan Campbell

The Roof Tree*

AN EPIC OF THE FEUD COUNTRY

By Charles Neville Buck

Author of "The Battle Cry," "When Bear Cat Went Dry," etc.

XXXIII

ONE might have counted ten while the picture held, with no other sound than the breathing of the two men and the strident clamor of a blue jay in the woods near by.

Rowlett had not been ordered to raise his hands, but he held them ostentatiously still and wide of his body. The revolver in its holster under his armpit might as well have been at home, for even had both started with an equal chance in the leger-demain of drawing and firing, he knew his master. Now, moreover, he faced an adversary no longer fettered by any pledge of private forbearance.

This, then, was the end—and it arrived just a damnable shade too soon, when with the falling of dusk he might have witnessed the closing scenes of his enemy's doom. To-morrow there would be no Kenneth Thornton to dread, but it looked as if to-morrow there would be no Bas Rowlett to enjoy immunity from fear.

"Hit war jest erbout one y'ar ago, Bas," came the even and implacable inflection of the other, "thet us two stud up hyar ter-gither. A heap hes done come ter pass since then. Don't ye want yore envellup, Bas?"

Silently and with a heavily moving hand Rowlett reached out and took the proffered paper, which bore his incriminating admissions and his signature, but he made no answer.

"Thet other time," went on Thornton with maddening deliberation, "hit war in the moonlight thet us two stud hyar, an' when ye told me ye war befriendin' me I war fool enough ter b'lieve ye. Don't ye recollict how we turned and looked down, an' ye p'inted out thet big tree in front of the house?"

The intriguer ground his teeth, but from the victor's privilege of verbose taunting he had no redress. After all, it would be a short-lived victory. Kenneth might exult in it now, but in a few hours he would be dangling at a rope's end.

"Ye showed hit ter me standin' thar high an' wide-spread in the moonlight, an' I seems ter recall thet ye 'lowed ye'd cut hit down ef ye hed yore way. Ye hain't hed yore way, though, Bas, despite Satan's unflaggin' aid. The old tree still stands thar a castin' hits shade over a place thet's come ter be my home—a place ye've done vainly sought ter defile."

Still Rowlett did not speak. There was a grim vestige of comfort left in the thought that when the moon shone again, Kenneth Thornton would have less reason to love that tree.

"Ye don't seem no master degree talk-ative ter-day, Bas," suggested the man with the pistol, which was no longer held leveled, though ready to leap upward. Then, almost musingly, he added: "An' thet's kinderly a pity, too, seein' ye hain't nuver goin' ter hev no other chanst!"

"Why don't ye shoot an' git done?" said Rowlett, with a leer of desperation. "Pull yore trigger, an' be damned ter ye! We'll meet in hell afore long, anyhow."

When Thornton spoke again, the wrath that had smoldered for a year like a banked furnace at last leaped into untrammeled blazing.

"I don't strike down even a man like *you* out o' sheer hate an' vengeance," he declared with an electrical vibrancy of pitch. "Hit's a bigger thing then thet. Ye've got ter know in full what ye dies fer,

afore I kills ye. Ye hain't deluded me as fur es ye thinks ye have. I knows ye betrayed me in Virginny. I knows ye shot at old Jim an' fathered the infamies of the riders. I knows ye sought ter fo'ce yoreself on Dorothy, though I didn't git thet knowledge from *her*. She kep' her bargain with ye!"

"A man right often thinks he knows things when he jest suspicions 'em," Bas reminded him with a forced and facetious calm; but the other instantly waved aside the subterfuge.

"Right often—yes, but not always, an' this hain't one of them delusions. I knows the full sum an' substance of yore infamies, an' yit I've done held my hand. Mebby ye thought my wrath war coolin'. Ef ye did, ye thought wrong!"

Thornton drew a long breath, and the color gradually went out of his brown face, leaving it white and rapt in an exaltation of passion.

"I've been bidin' my time, an' my time hes come," he declared in a voice that rang like a bronze bell. "When I kills ye, I does a holy act. Hit's a charity ter mankind an' womankind; an' yit some foreparent bred hit inter me ter be a fool, an' I've got ter go on bein' one."

A note of hopefulness, incredulous yet quickening with a new lease on courage, flashed into the gray despair of the conspirator's mind.

"What does ye mean?" he demanded.

Thornton laughed ironically.

"I hain't goin' ter shoot ye down like ye merits," he said; "an' yit I misdoubts ef hit's so much because I've got ter give ye a chanst es the hunger ter see yore life go out under my bare fingers!"

Slowly dying hope had its redawning in Bas Rowlett's face. His adversary's strength and quickness were locally famous, but he too was a giant in perfect condition, and the prize of life was worth a good fight.

He stood now with hands held high while Thornton disarmed him and flung his pistol and knife far backward into the thicket. His own weapon the Harper leader still held.

"Now me an' you are goin' ter play a little game by the name of 'craven an' damn fool,'" Thornton enlightened him with a grim smile. "I'm the damn fool. Hit's fist an' skull, tooth an' nail, or anything else ye likes; but fust I'm goin' ter put this hyar gun of mine in a place whar ye kain't git at hit. Then one of us is goin' ter fling t'other one off o' thet clift whar she draps down them two hundred feet. Does ye like thet play, Bas?"

"I reckon I'll do my best," said Rowlett sullenly. "I hain't skeercely got no rather in the matter, nohow."

Thornton stripped off his coat and rolled his sleeves high, and the other man followed suit. Bas even grinned sardonically in appreciation when the other thrust his pistol under a rock that strained his strength to lift. The man who got that weapon out would need to be one who had time and deliberation at his disposal, not one who snatched it up in any short-winded interval of struggle.

Then the two stood glaring into each other's faces with the naked savagery of wild beasts. Yet with an impulse that came through even that red fog of fury, Kenneth Thornton turned his head and looked for the fraction of an instant down upon the gray roof and the green tree where the shadows lay lengthened in the valley.

In that half second of diverted gaze, Rowlett launched himself like a charging bull, with head down to ram his adversary's solar plexus, and with arms outstretched for a bone-breaking grapple.

The attack came with almost the suddenness of lightning. Thornton, leaping sidewise, caught its passing force and stumbled, but he grappled and carried his adversary down with him. The two rolled in an embrace that strained ribs inward on panting lungs, leg locking leg, and fingers clutching for a vulnerable hold. Then Thornton slipped eel-like out of the chancery that would have crushed him into helplessness, and sprang to his feet; and if Rowlett was slower, it was by only a shade.

They stood, with sweat already flowing and eyes blazing with murderous fire. They crouched and circled, advancing step by step, each warily sparring for an advantage and ready to plunge in or leap sidewise.

Then came the impact of bone and flesh once more, and both went down. Thornton's face pressed against that of his enemy as they fell, and Rowlett opened and clamped his jaws as does a bulldog trying for a grip upon the jugular.

The battle was Homerically barbaric and starkly savage. It was fought between

two wild creatures who had shed their humanity—one the stronger and more massive of brawn; the other more adroit and resourceful. The teeth of the conspirator closed on the angle of the jawbone instead of the neck, and found no fleshy hold. While they twisted and writhed with weird incoherencies of sound going up in the smother of dust, Bas Rowlett felt the closing of iron fingers on his throat. While he clawed and gripped and kicked to break the strangle, his eyes seemed to swell and burn and start from their sockets, and the patch of darkening sky went black.

It was only the collapse of the human mass in his arms into dead weight that brought Kenneth Thornton out of his mania and back to consciousness. The battle was over; as he drew his arms away, his enemy sank shapeless and limp at his feet.

For a few seconds more Thornton stood rocking on his feet; then, with a supreme effort, he stooped and lifted the heavy weight that hung sagging like one newly dead and not yet rigid.

With his burden Thornton staggered to the cliff's edge and swung his man from side to side, gaining momentum. Then, suddenly, he stopped and stood silhouetted there, sweat-shiny and tattered, blood-stained and panting; and instead of pitching Bas Rowlett outward he laid him down on the shelf of rock.

Later, Bas Rowlett came out of a heavy and disturbed sleep in which there had been no rest, to find himself lying with his feet hanging over the precipice edge and Thornton looking intently down upon him. In Thornton's hand was the recovered pistol.

His perplexed brain reeled to the realization that he still lay up here, instead of among the rocks upon which he should have been broken two hundred feet below. Presumably the other had waited for the return of his victim's consciousness to finish his work.

But Thornton's unaccountable whims had flown at another tangent.

"Git up, Bas!" he commanded briefly. "Yore life b'longs ter me. I won hit, an' ye're goin' ter die, but my fingers don't ache no more fer a holt on yore throat."

"What air—ye goin' ter do, now?" stammered Rowlett, who found words hard to form.

The victor responded promptly.

"I've done concluded ter take ye down thar, afore ye dies, an' make ye crave Dorothy's pardon on yore bended knees. Ye owes hit ter her!"

Slowly Rowlett dragged himself to a sitting posture. His incredulous senses wanted to sing out in exultation, but he forced himself to demur with surly obduracy.

"Hain't hit enough ter kill me without humiliatin' me too?"

"No, hit hain't enough fer me, an' hit's too late fer ye to make no terms now!"

Bas Rowlett exaggerated his dizzy weakness. There was every reason for taking time. This mad idea that had seized upon the other might prove to be a miracle of deliverance for him. If only he could kill time until night came and the moon rose, it would be not only a respite, but a full pardon capped with a triumph.

Down there at that house the mob would soon come, and circumstance would convert him, at a single turn of the wheel, from humbled victim to the avenger ironically witnessing the trial and execution of his late conqueror.

After a while he rose and stood experimentally on his legs.

"I reckon I kin walk now," he said drearily, "ef so be ye lets me go slow. I hain't got much stren'th back yit."

"Thar hain't no tormentin' haste," responded Thornton. "We've got all night afore us."

When they reached the house, it stood mistily hulked among shadows, with its front door open upon an unlighted room. The two men had tramped down that slope in silence, and they crossed the threshold in silence, the captive preceding his captor. The householder paused to bolt the door behind him.

Then, holding a vigilant eye on the forced guest, who had not spoken, Thornton lighted a lamp and backed to the closed bedroom door, at the sill of which he had seen a slender thread of brightness. In all his movements he went with a wary slowness, as if held by a cord—the cord being the line of direct glance that he never permitted to deviate from the face of his prisoner.

Now while his right hand still fondled the revolver, he groped with his left for the latch and opened the door at his back.

"Dorothy!" he called in a low voice. "I wisht ye'd come in hyar, honey."

From within he heard a sound like a low moan, but he knew that it was a sigh of ineffable relief.

"Thank God ye're back, Ken!" she breathed. "Air ye all right, an' unharmed?"

"All right an' unharmed," he responded, as he stepped to the side of the doorframe and stood there, a rigid sentinel.

When Dorothy came to the threshold, she took in at once the whole picture, pregnant with significance—the glint of lamplight on the ready revolver, the relentless, tooth-marked face of her husband, and the figure of the vanquished plotter, with his powerful shoulders hunched forward and his head hanging.

On the mantel ticked a small tin clock, which Bas Rowlett watched from the tail of a furtive eye.

As Dorothy Thornton stood in gracious slenderness against the background of the lighted door, with a nimbus about her head, she was all feminine delicacy and allurement; but in that moment she stiffened to an overwhelming rush of memories, inciting her to a transport of wrath for which she had no words.

She saw Bas Rowlett stripped naked to the revolting bareness of his unclean soul, and she drew back with a shudder of loathing and unmoderated hate.

"Why did ye dally with him, Ken?" she demanded fiercely. "Don't ye know thet whilst ye lets him live ye're playin' with a rattlesnake?"

"He hain't got long ter live," came the coldly confident response; "but afore he dies, he wants ter crave yore pardon, Dorothy, an' he wants ter do hit kneelin' down!"

Bas Rowlett shot a sidelong glance at the clock. Minutes were the letters that spelled life and death. He listened tensely, too, and fancied that he heard a whippoorwill. There were many whippoorwills calling out there in the woods, but he thought that this was a double call, and that between its whistlings a man might have counted five. Of that, however, he could not be sure.

"I hain't got no choice, Dorothy," he whined, fencing for delay at any cost. "Even ef I had, though, I'd crave yore pardon of my own free will. But afore I does hit, thar's a few words I'd love ter say."

Dorothy Thornton stood just inside the door. Pity, mercy, and tenderness were qualities as inherent in her as perfume in a rose; but there was something else in her as well, just as there is death in some perfumes. If he had been actually a poisonous reptile instead of one in human shape, Bas Rowlett could have been to her, at that moment, no less personal.

"Yes," she said slowly, as a memory stirred the confession of her emotions. "Thar's one thing I'd like ter say, too; but hit hain't in no words of my own. Hit's somethin' thet was said by another woman a long spell back."

From the mantel-shelf she produced the old journal, and opened its yellowed pages.

"I've been settin' hyar," she went on, "readin' this old book, mighty nigh all day. I *hed* ter read hit"—her voice broke there, then went steadily on again—"or else go mad, whilst I was waitin'—waitin' ter know whether Ken hed kilt ye or *you'd* kilt *him*." Again she paused for a moment, and turned her eyes to her husband. "This book sheds light on a heap of things thet we all needs ter know erbout. Hit tells how your foreparent sought ter kill the tree thet our ancestors planted. Hit's kinderly like an indictment in the high cote."

While Dorothy Thornton, out of those ancient pages, accused the blood sprung from the renegade and his Indian squaw, the men listened.

To the husband it was incitement and revelation. The tree out there, standing warder in the dark, became, as he listened with engrossed interest, more than ever a being of sentient spirit, and less than ever a thing of mere wood and leaf.

To Bas Rowlett it should have been an indictment, or perhaps an excuse, with its testimony of blood strains stronger than himself; but from its moral his mind was wandering to a more present and gripping interest. He was sure, now, that he had heard the double whippoorwill call! In five minutes more he would be saved—yet five minutes might be too long.

Dorothy paused.

"Ye sees," she said with a deep gravity, "from the start, in this country, our folks hev been despitefully tricked an' misused by the offspring of thet Indian child thet our foreparents tuck in an' befriended. From the start, the old tree hes held us safe with hits charm erginst evil. Ever since—"

She broke off there, and paused with astonished eyes that turned to the door, upon

which had sounded a commanding rap. Then she rose and went over cautiously, to open it an inch or two and look out.

When she raised the latch, a man, rendered unrecognizable by a mask upon his face and a black slicker that cloaked him to his ankles, threw it wide, so that the woman was forced, stumbling, back. Then through the opening poured a half-dozen others in like habiliments of disguise.

All held outthrust rifles, and the one who had entered first shouted:

"All right, boys—the door's open!"

Kenneth Thornton had not been able to shoot at the initial instant, because Dorothy stood in his way. After that it was useless. He saw Bas Rowlett step forward with a sudden change of expression on his pasty face.

"Now, then," cried Bas, "hit's a gray hoss of another color!"

XXXIV

When Kenneth Thornton brought his captive down the slope that afternoon, he had left his rifle in safe concealment, not wishing to hamper himself with any weapon save the revolver which had never left his palm until this moment. Now, with the instant gone in which he might have used it to stem the tide of invasion, he was not fool enough to fire. A silent, steady current of black-clad humanity was still flowing inward across the threshold, and every man was armed.

Yet, at the ring of victorious elation in Bas Rowlett's voice, Thornton was almost overpowered by the impulse to strike down that master of deceit before his own moment came—almost but not quite. He knew that the bark of his weapon would bring a chorused retort from other firearms, and that Dorothy might fall. As it was, the mob had come for him alone; so he walked over and laid his revolver quietly down on the table.

The girl had seen this byplay, and had rightly interpreted its meaning. For her the future held nothing except a tragedy which she could not face, and for a distracted moment she forgot even her baby as she reacted to the bitterness of her vendetta blood. She seized Hump Doane's rifle, which still rested against the wall near her hand, and threw the muzzle to Rowlett's breast.

"I'll git *you*, anyhow!" she screamed between clenched teeth.

It was a promise that she would have kept—a promise that would have turned the room into a shambles—had not one of the masked figures been quick enough to reach her and snatch the gun out of her grasp. Dorothy stepped back then, her eyes staring with the fury of failure as she gazed at the man who had disarmed her.

One by one, other dark and uniform figures continued to enter and range themselves about the wall. The night-rider who held the captured rifle had not spoken; but the woman's eye, as it ranged up and down, caught sight of a shoe, and she recognized a patch. That home mending told her that the enemy who had balked her in the last poor comfort of vengeance was Sim Squires, a member of her own household, and her lips moved in their impulse to call out his name in denunciation and revilement.

They moved, and then, in obedience to some sudden afterthought, closed tight again without speaking. Her eyes, however, spoke a silent anathema of scorn; and though she did not know or suspect it, the thoughts mirrored in them were read and interpreted by the leader of the mob.

Dorothy crossed the floor, ringed with its border of grimly cloaked humanity, and took her stand by the side of the man who leaned stoically at the corner of his hearth. At least she could do that much in declaration of loyalty.

Thornton folded his arms, and, as his eyes ran over the anonymous beings who had come to kill him, he fell back on the only philosophy left him—that of dying with such an unwhining demeanor as should rob them of triumph in their gloating.

At length the door closed, and it was with a dramatic effect of climax that the last man who entered bore, coiled on his arm, the slender but stout rope which was to be both actual instrument and symbol of their purpose.

Kenneth felt Dorothy, whose two hands were clasped about his folded arm, wince and shudder at the sinister detail. Unwilling to remain totally passive, even with the end so near and so certain, he chose to speak before they spoke to him.

"I knows right well what ye've come fer, men," he said, with more of disdain than of abjectness in his steady voice; "but I hain't got no lamentation ter make, an' somehow I hain't es much terrified as mebby I ought ter be."

"Ye've got a right good license ter be terrified," announced the disguised voice of the masked leader, "onless death's a thing ye favors over life. Even ef ye does thet, hangin's a right shameful way ter die!"

Thornton shook his head.

"Hit hain't hangin' hitself thet's shameful," he corrected the other; "hit's what a man hangs fer." He paused, then with a note of entire seriousness he inquired: "I reckon ye don't aim ter deny me the privilege of sayin' a few words fust, does ye? I've always heared thet they let a man talk afore he got hung."

"Go on!" growled the other. "But mebby ye'd better save hit twell we've done tried ye. We aims ter give ye a hearin' afore ye dies."

Thornton inclined his head gravely, more sensible of the clutching grasp of his wife's fingers on his tensed biceps than of more vital matters.

"When ye gits through hangin' me," he told them, by way of valedictory, "I wants ye ter recall thet thar's somethin' ye hain't kilt yit in these hills, an' won't nuver kill. Thar's a sperit that some of us hes fostered hyar, and hit 'll go on jest the same without us. Hit's a bigger thing then any man, an' hit's goin' ter dog ye till hit gits ye all—every sneakin' mother's son an' every murderin' man Jack of yore sorry outfit! What things we've ondertook hain't a goin' ter die with me, ner with no other man ye gang-murders; an' when the high cote sets next time, thar'll be soldiers hyar thet hain't none affrighted by the repute ye b'ars!" He paused. "Thet's all I've got ter say," he added. "Albeit I'm the victim right now, God in Heaven knows I pities all of ye from the bottom of my heart—because I knows thet amongst ye right now air some siv'ral thet, save fer bein' deluded by traitors an' cravens, air good men."

The individual who was acting as spokesman bent forward and thrust his face close to that of the man they had come to lynch.

"Nuther yore brag nor yore threats hain't a goin' ter avail ye none, Thornton, because yore time is done come. Thar's a hugeous big tree a standin' out thar by yore front door, an' afore an hour's gone by ye're goin' ter be swingin' from hit. Folks norrates thet yore woman an' you sets a heap of store by thet old walnuck. You calls hit the roof tree, an' believes hit holds a witch-spell ter safeguard ye. We're goin' ter see kin hit save ye now!"

At mention of the walnut, Dorothy clutched her hands to her breast and caught her breath, but the man went on.

"Ye hain't no native-born man hyar, Thornton, albeit ye've done sought ter run the country like some old-time king or lord beyond the water. Ye hain't nuthin' but a trespassin' furriner, nohow, an' we don't love no tyrant. This roof tree hain't yourn by no better right then the nest thet the cuckoo steals from the bird thet built hit. We don't even grant ye ownership of thet old walnuck-tree; but we aims ter loan hit ter ye long enough ter hang on!"

He halted and looked about the place. Then, with cheap theatricism, he demanded:

"Who accuses this man? Let him stand ter the front!"

Three or four dark figures moved unhurriedly toward the center of the circle; but one who had not been rehearsed in his part stepped with a more eager haste to the fore, and that one was Bas Rowlett.

"I don't know es I've rightly got no license ter speak up amongst men that I kain't recognize," he made hypocritical declaration; "but yit I kain't hardly hold my peace, because ye come in good season fer me. Ye saved my life."

After a momentary pause, as if waiting for permission to be heard, he went on:

"This man thet I saved from death one time when somebody sought ter kill him laywayed me an hour or so back, an' atter he'd disarmed an' maltreated me he fotched me home hyar, ter insult me some more in front of his woman, afore he kilt me in cold blood. He done them things because I wouldn't censure an' disgust you men thet calls yoreself the riders."

Thornton smiled derisively as he listened to that indictment. Then he capped it with an ironic amendment.

"We all know ye're the true leader of this murder-gang, Bas. Ye don't need ter be bashful erbout speakin' out yore mind ter yore own slaves!"

Rowlett wheeled, his swarthy face burning to its high cheek-bones with a flush that spread and dyed his bull-like neck.

"All right, then!" he barked out, at last casting aside all subterfuge. "Ef they harkens ter what I says, I'll tell 'em ter string ye up, hyar an' now, ter thet thar same tree you an' yore woman sots sich

store by! I'll tell 'em ter teach Virginny meddlers what hit costs ter come trespassin' into Kaintuck!"

He was breathing thickly with the excited reaction from his recent terror and despair.

"Men," he bellowed almost jubilantly, "don't waste no time! The gallows-tree stands ready! Hit's right thar by the front porch!"

Dorothy had listened in stunned silence. Her face was parchment pale, but she was hardly able yet to grasp the sudden turn of events to irremediable tragedy.

The irrevocable meaning of the thing she had feared in her dreams seemed too vast to comprehend, and she had not clearly realized that only minutes now, and few of them, stood between her husband and his death. Her scornful eyes had been dwelling on the one figure she had recognized—the figure of Sim Squires, whom it had never occurred to her to distrust. But when several night-riders pushed her bruskly from her place beside her man, drew his hands together at his back, and began whipping cords about his unresisting wrists, the horror of the outrage broke on her in its ghastly fulness and nearness.

The stress they laid on the mention of the tree had brought her out of the coma of her dazed condition into an acute agony of reality.

There was a fiendish symbolism in their intent. The man they called a usurper must die on the very tree that gave their home its significance, and no other instrument of vengeance would satisfy them. The old bitterness had begun generations ago, when the renegade who "painted his face and went to the Indians" had sought to destroy the tree, and with it the happiness of the household. Now his descendant was renewing the warfare on the spot where it had begun, and the tree was again the center of the drama.

Dorothy's knees weakened, and she would have fallen had she not reeled back against the corner of the mantel. A low, heart-broken moan came, long-drawn, from her lips.

There was nothing to be done—yet submission meant death, while every moment before death was a moment of life. In the woman's eyes blazed a hunger for battle, and as they met those of her husband they flashed the unspoken exhortation:

"Don't submit! Die fighting!"

It was the old dogma of mountain ferocity, but Thornton knew its futility, and shook his head. Then he answered her silent incitement in words.

"Hit's too late, Dorothy. I'd only git you kilt as well as me. I reckon they hain't grudgin' *you* none, es things stands now."

But the mob leader laughed, and, turning his face to the wife, he ruthlessly tore away even that vestige of reassurance.

"We hain't makin' no brash promises erbout the woman, Thornton," he brutally announced. "I read in her eyes jest now thet she reeco'nized one of us — an' hit hain't safe ter know too much!"

They were still working at the ropes on the prisoner's wrists, and the knots were not yet secure. The man had gaged his situation, and had resigned himself to die like a slaughter-house animal instead of a mountain-lion — in order to save his wife. Now they denied him that!

Suddenly his face went black, and his eyes became torrential with fury. His lunging movement was as swift and powerful as a tiger's spring. His transition from quiet to earthquake violence was as abrupt and deadly as the current of an electric chair.

His shoulders and wrists ripped at their bonds, and the men busied about them were hurled away as with a powder blast. The arms came free and the hands seized a chair. A human tornado was at work in a space too crowded for the use of firearms; and when the insufficient weapon had been shattered into splinters and fallen in worthless bits, there were broken crowns and prostrate figures all around. Faces were marked with bruises and blood and laceration; but the odds were too overwhelmingly uneven, and at last they bore him down, pounded and kicked, to the puncheon floor. When they lifted him to his feet again, the ropes that fastened him were firm enough to hold.

Then Kenneth Thornton spoke again—spoke with a passion that seemed almost as destructive as the short-lived chair he had been swinging flail-like, though the panting exertion made his voice come in disjointed and sob-like gasps.

"Ye hain't done yit!" he shouted into their maddened faces, as they crowded and yapped about him. "By dint of numbers ye've done tuck me alive, but thar's still a reckonin' ahead!"

Above the answering chorus of jeers rang his berserk fury of defiance.

"Ye kin go ahead an' hang me now—an' be damned ter ye! Ye kin even murder a woman, ef ye've got a mind ter—but thar's a baby in this house thet's comin' ter manhood some day!"

"Ye won't be hyar ter train him up fer vengeance," came the sneering voice of Bas Rowlett, who had taken care to stand clear of the conflict.

"He won't need no trainin' up," Thornton retorted. "Hit's bred in his blood an' his bone ter hate snakes an' kill 'em. He's drunk hit in at his mother's breast an' breathed hit in the air. He'll settle our score some day!"

XXXV

Sim Squires knew that when the brief farce of the trial took place, he would be called forward to testify with a few prearranged lies. In his mouth was a pebble, put there to change his voice; but in his mutinous heart was an overwhelming desire to see Bas Rowlett in such a debased position as that which Kenneth Thornton now occupied.

Of all men, Sim feared and hated Bas most; and more than ever abhorrent was the compulsion that made him a member of the riders. The scorn of Dorothy's eyes had a scorpion sting that he could not escape. This woman had given his life an atmosphere of friendliness and kindliness which it had not known before.

"Now," announced the masked spokesman, "we're well-nigh ready, an' thar hain't no virtue in bein' dilatory, albeit we don't aim ter hang him untried. Witness number one, come forward!"

The first witness was Sim Squires. He hung back as if his tongue had been stricken with sudden dumbness and his limbs with paralysis. Slowly he looked at Kenneth Thornton, whose face was pale, but set once more to the calm of resolute courage. He noted the mingled horror and contempt that showed in the deep and suffering eyes of Thornton's wife.

"Thar's a man hyar in this room," began Sim Squires, "thet's done been seekin' evidence erginst the riders; an' he's done secured a lavish of hit, too."

So far his words were running in expected grooves, and as the voice went on—a little indistinct because of the pebble lodged under the speaker's tongue—his impatient audience accorded him only a perfunctory attention.

"He's done hed spies amongst ye, an' he's got evidence thet no court kain't fail ter convict on," proceeded the witness slowly. "He aims ter penitentiary you!" His finger rose and settled, pointing toward the man who had acted as spokesman—Rick Joyce. Then it rose again and fell on others, as Sim added: "An' *you*—an' *you!*"

"We don't aim ter give him no chanst," interrupted Joyce.

It was then that Sim Squires did something utterly unexpected.

Suddenly this amazing witness ripped off his mask, threw aside his hat, and spat out the pebble that interfered with his enunciation. Like the epilepsy victim who slides abruptly from sane normality into madness, the man became transformed. The timidities that had fettered him and held him a slave to cowardice were swept away like unconsidered drift on the tide of a passion that was willing to court death, if vengeance could come first.

Sim had definitely crossed the line of allegiance, and meant to swing the fatal fury of that mob from one victim to another, or to die in his attempt. His eyes were the ember pupils of the madman or the martyr. His face was the frenzied face of a man with whom ordinary considerations no longer count, whose idea is fixed and single, and to whom personal consequences have become unimportant. His body was rigid yet vibrant, and his voice rang through the room, as his finger rose and pointed into the face of Bas Rowlett.

"Thet man," he shouted, "hes bore the semblance of yore friend, but he aims ter deestroy ye! I knows, because I've done been his slave, an' he's told me so. He aims ter hev ye murder Ken Thornton fer him fust, an' then ter penitentiary ye fer doin' his dirty work. Ye hain't nothin' on God's green y'arth but only his dupes!"

Squires paused for breath. Instead of the clamor and outcry for which he had braced himself, he encountered a hushed stillness through which he could hear the hammering of his own heart.

Rowlett had started to bellow out an enraged denial, but had swiftly reconsidered, and had chosen instead to treat the accusation with a quieter and more telling contempt. Now he laughed derisively as he turned toward Joyce.

"I reckon," he suggested, "I don't even need ter gainsay no sich damn lie es thet, does I?"

But of late there had been so much treachery that no man knew whom he could trust. To Rowlett's astonished discomfiture, he recognized the stern and ominous note of doubt in Joyce's response.

"Ef I was you, I wouldn't only gainsay hit, but I'd strive master hard ter *prove* my denial!"

"I hain't done yit!" shouted Sim, with a new vigor of aggressiveness.

At the sight of this human hurricane which had developed out of a man heretofore regarded as unimportant, the violence of the mob hung suspended, inquisitive, astonished.

The tanned face of the witness had become pallid, but out of it his eyes shot jets of fire, hysterical to madness, yet convincing in an earnestness that transcended the fear of death and carried indubitable conviction. His body shook as with a palsy as he confronted the man whom, next to Bas Rowlett, he had feared above all others. In evidence of his impassioned sincerity he blurted out his own confession.

"I kilt Joe Joyce," announced Sim Squires; "an' I sought ter kill Ken Thornton, too, when he fust come hyar. I done both them deeds because I didn't dast gainsay the man thet bade me do 'em. His threats terrified me. His power over me made me a craven, an' his dollars in my pocket paid me fer them dastardly jobs. Thet man war Bas Rowlett, thar!"

The leader of the mob stood for an instant with the stunned senses of an ox struck by a cleaver. After that first dumfounded moment he wanted the truth as a starving man wants food. Joe Joyce had been his nephew, and if this witness were telling the truth it would not appease him to take vengeance on the servant only. A more summary punishment was owing to the master.

"Go on!" he sternly ordered. "Tell hit all!"

Rowlett again thrust himself forward, but Rick Joyce, scarcely looking at him, sent him reeling backward with an open-handed blow upon the chest.

With torrential and cascading onrush came the long, black record of the master plotter's treachery, from its beginning in jealousy to its end in betrayal of the riders.

"He come over hyar when this man Thornton lay in jail, an' sought ter make love ter thet woman!" shouted the frenzied witness.

Dorothy, who had been leaning against the wall, unnerved and dazed, raised a warning hand and interrupted.

"Stop!" she cried. "I've done told Kenneth all thet. Whatever he hears erbout this man, he hears from me. We don't need no other testimony!"

Then it was that the room began to waver and spin about Dorothy Thornton, until, with the drone of the hired man's voice diminishing in her ears, she fell swooning, and was lifted to a chair.

When her eyes opened — even before they opened—she was again conscious of that voice; but now it was one of dominating confidence, stinging with invective, scourging with accusations that could be verified, ripping away to its unbelievable nakedness all the falsity of Bas Rowlett's record. It was a voice of triumph!

In the altered attitudes of the listening figures the woman could read that the accuser was no longer talking to a hostile audience, but to one grown receptive. These men knew now how Bas had craftily set the Harpers and the Doanes at one another's throats, and how Thornton had tranquillized them. They knew how their own grievances against the man they had come to hang had been trumped up from carefully nourished misconceptions. Above all, they saw how they themselves had been dupes and tools, encouraged to organize and jeopardize their necks only that they might act as executioners of Rowlett's private enemy and then be thrown to the wolves of the law.

"I come inter this house," declared Sim Squires, "at Bas Rowlett's behest, ter spy on Ken Thornton. I j'ined the riders fer the same reason; but I'm done with lyin' now. Hit's Bas Rowlett thet made a fool of me, an' thet seeks ter make convicts of you!"

He paused; then, wheeling once more, he walked slowly, step by step, to where Bas Rowlett stood cowering.

"Ye come hyar ter hang the wrong man, boys!" he shouted. "The right man's hyar, the rope's hyar, an' the tree's hyar! Hang Bas Rowlett!"

There was a silence of grim tension over the room when the accuser's voice fell quiet after its thrilling peroration. The masked men gave no betrayal of final sentiment

yet. The woman rose unsteadily from her chair, and pressed her hands against the tumultuous pounding of her heart. She could not still it while she waited for the verdict and scarcely dared to hope.

Rowlett had long been trusted. Had there been left in him the audacity for ten adroitly used minutes of boldness, he might have been heard that night in his own defense; but beneath all his brutal aggressiveness Bas had a fiber of base and craven cowardice.

Now, with every eye turned on him, with the scales of his fate still trembling, the accused wretch cast furtive glances toward the door, weighing and considering the chances of escape. He abandoned that idea as hopeless; opened his lips and let his jaw sag; then crouched back as if in the shadow of the room's corner he hoped to find concealment.

"Look at him, men!" shouted Sim Squires, following up the wreck of arrogance who through years had browbeaten him, and becoming, in turn, himself the bully. "Look at him huddlin' thar like a whipped cur-dawg! Hain't he done es good es made confession by the guilty meanness in his face?"

He paused, and then, with a brutal laugh, he struck the cowering Rowlett across the mouth. It was a blow that Sim had dreamed of in his sleep, but never dared to think of when awake. Rowlett condemned himself to death when he flinched and failed to strike back.

"Jest now, men," rushed on the exhorter, "ye seen Thornton thar facin' death, an' he showed ye how a man kin demean himself when he thinks his time hes come. Take yore choice between them two, an' decide which one needs hangin'!"

Then, feeding on the meat of new authority, Sim Squires, who had always been an underling before, seized up from the dead ashes on the hearth a charred stick. It happened to be a bit of black walnut that had grown and died on the tree which was about to become a gallows.

With its blackened end, Sim drew a line across the planks of the floor, between himself and Rick Joyce.

"Thar now!" he passionately harangued his hearers. "Thar hain't room in this country fer a lot of warrin' enemies thet would all be friends save fer mischief-makers. Ken Thornton hes done admitted thar's good men amongst ye, an' we've agreed ter punish them briggatty fellers thet kilt Pete Doane; so thar hain't rightfully no grudge left outstandin'. I takes up my stand on this side of thet line, along with Ken Thornton, an' I summonses every man thet's decent amongst ye all ter come over hyar an' stand with us. We aims ter hev our hangin' without no deefault, but with a diff'rent man swingin' on the rope!"

For the space of forty seconds, which seemed as many minutes, a thunder-brooding tension hung in the stillness of the room. Then, without haste or excitement, Rick Joyce took off his hat, dropped it to the floor, and flung his mask after it. When he had crossed the line, he turned.

"Come on, men!" he gave brusk and peremptory invitation. "This hyar's whar we b'longs at!"

At first they responded singly and hesitantly, but soon it was a small stampede—save for those who kept guard at the doors. Ten minutes later Kenneth Thornton stood free of limb, while Bas Rowlett trembled, putty pale, in the center of the room, with bound wrists and a noose draped across his shoulders.

"I only asks one thing of ye," faltered Bas, from whose soul had oozed the last drop of manly resistance. "I come hyar ter crave this woman's pardon, an' I still wants ter do thet, without nobody else ter hear what I says."

"Ef she's willin' ter listen, we'll let ye talk," acceded Squires, who found himself unchallenged spokesman. "But we won't take no chances with ye. When the rope's over the limb an' everything's ready, then ye kin hev yore say!"

Outside, the night was as gracious as the previous one had been, when old Hump Doane sat waiting vainly for the return of his son; but across the moonlit sky drifted squadrons of fleecy clouds, and through the plumed head of the mighty walnut sounded the restive whisper of a breeze.

The house stood squarely blocked with cobalt shadows about it, and the hills were brooding in blue-black immensities; but over the valley was a flooding wash of platinum and silver. Fragrances and quiet cadences stole along the warm current, but the song of the whippoorwill was genuine now, and plaintive with a saddened sweetness.

The walnut-tree itself—a child of the forest which had, through generations,

been the friend of man—stood like a monument in the silence and majesty of its own long memories. Under its base, where the roots sank deep into the foundations of the enduring hills, slept the dead who had loved it long ago. Perhaps in its pungent and aromatic sap there ran something of the converted life and essence that had been their blood. Its bole, five feet of stalwart diameter, rose straight and tapering to the first right-angle limbs, each in itself almost a tree. Its multitude of lance-head leaves swept outward and upward in countless succession to the feathery crest that stirred seventy feet overhead, seeming to brush the large, low-hanging stars that the moon had dimmed.

All was tranquil and idyllic there—until the house door opened and a line of men filed out, bringing to his shameful end a human creature who shambled along, broken in spirit and already half dead with terror.

Over the lowest branch, with business-like precision, Sim Squires hitched a stone on the end of a long cord, and to the cord he fastened the rope's end. All that was needed now was the weight which the rope was to lift; and in the blue-ink shadow that mercifully cloaked it and made it vague, they placed the bound figure of their victim.

XXXVI

As if to mask a picture of such violence, the tree's heavy canopy made the spot one of Stygian murk. Even the moon hid its face just then, so that the world went black, and the stars seemed more brilliant against the inky velvet of the sky. But the light had held until the grim preparations were finished, and then, when Bas Rowlett had taken his appointed place, tethered and wearing the hempen loop; when the other end of the long line had been passed through the broken slats of the closed shutters, where it would be held by many hands in assurance against escape, Sim Squires kept his promise.

His followers trooped back into the house, and he himself remained there, on watch, only until Dorothy Thornton appeared for a moment in the open door and came slowly to the foot of the tree, with the stiffness of a sleep-walker. She could scarcely see the two men shrouded there in the profundity of shadow, and she had almost walked into the one who was to die before she realized his nearness and drew back shuddering.

Sim, who was holding the loose end of the rope, so that it would not slacken too freely, put it into her hand.

"Ye'll hev ter take hold of this," he directed. "We've got t'other end indoors. When ye're ready for us, or should he seek ter git away, jest give hit a light jerk or two. We won't interfere with ye, ner come out, till we gits thet signal; but don't suffer him ter parley overlong!"

Then the man left her, and the woman found herself standing there in the darkness with a terrible sense of death hovering at her shoulder.

For a moment neither she nor Bas Rowlett spoke. Dorothy lifted her eyes to the tree, from which had always emanated an influence of peace. She needed that message of peace now. She looked at the dark human figure, robbed of its menace, robbed of all its paltry arrogance; and the anger that had torn her ebbed and subsided into a sickness of contemptuous pity.

Then the cloud drifted away from the moon, and the world stood out again from darkness into silvery light. The breeze that had brought about the brightening bore a low, wailing voice from high overhead, where the walnut-tree seemed to sob with some poignant suffering—seemed to strive for the articulate voice that nature had denied it.

That monument to honored dead could never shed its hallowed spirit of peace again, if once it had been outraged with the indignities of a gibbet! If once it bore, instead of its own sweetly wholesome produce, that debased fruit of the gallows-tree, its dignity would be forever broken! There in the flooding moonlight of the white and blue night it was protesting with a moan of uneasy rustling.

This thing could not be tolerated—and suddenly but clearly Dorothy knew it. The prisoner deserved death. No false pity could blind her to that truth. Death must ride at the saddle cantle of such a man—must some day overtake him. It might overtake him to-night; but it must not be here.

"Bas!" she broke out in a low and trembling voice of abrupt decision. "I kain't suffer hit ter happen—I kain't do hit!"

The varied strains and terrors of that day and night had made her voice a thing of gasps and catching breath; but while the

man stood silent, she gathered her scattered powers and went on, ignoring him and talking to the tree.

"He needs killin', God knows," she declared; "but he mustn't die on yore branches, old roof tree. Hit was love thet planted ye long ago, an' love thet planted ye back ergin when hate hed tore ye up by the roots. I don't aim ter let ye be defiled now!"

She broke off, and somehow the voice that stirred up there seemed to change from its note of suffering to a long-drawn sigh of relief, the calm of a tranquillized spirit.

The young woman stood there motionless for a moment, with one hand uplifted, and with such relief in her heart as might come from answered prayer in the cloistered dimness of a cathedral. It was, to her, a cathedral that towered there above her, with its single column; a place hallowed by mercy, a zone of sanctuary; a spot where vengeance had always been thwarted, where malevolence had failed.

Again her voice came in a rapt whisper.

"Ye stands ter-night fer the same things ye've always stood fer," she said. "Ye stands fer home an' decency, for the restin'-place of dead foreparents an' the bornin' of new generations, fer green leaves an' happiness. The only death ye gives countenance to is thet of folks thet goes straight ter God, an' not them thet's destined fer torment!"

Inside the room the conclave maintained a grim silence. The shuttered window shut from their sight the interview which they were permitting with a rude sense of affording the man they had condemned some substitute for extreme unction—an interval to shrive his soul with penitence and prayer. But through the opening of the broken slats, high up in the shutter which gave sliding-room, passed the rope, and at its other end stood the man upon whose neck it was fixed—the man whose hands and feet were tethered, and whose movements were being watched by the woman.

Sim Squires and Rick Joyce, standing shoulder to shoulder, held the free end of the rope in their hands. The others breathed heavily, and their faces were implacable. They were reluctant to grant such a privilege to the condemned man, yet steadfast in their resolve to keep the word they had given him.

"She's lettin' him talk too long," growled a voice.

"Shet up!" Rick Joyce growled back. "He's goin' ter be dead a long time!"

Outside, Dorothy had turned again to Rowlett.

"You an' yore foreparents hev plotted an' worked evil since the fust days the white man come hyar, Bas," she declared. "Thar hain't no death too shameful fer ye, an' thar hain't no hate deeper then thet I feels fer ye. Ye've betrayed an' wronged me an' everybody I ever loved, an' I've swore I'd kill ye myself ef need be. I'm half sorrowful I didn't do hit; but from them fust days this hyar tree hes spread peace an' safety over this house an' them thet dwelt in hit. Hit's been holy, like some church thet God hes blessed, an' I aims ter keep hit holy. Ef they hangs ye somewhars else, I reckon they'll do simple jestice; but hit hain't goin' ter be from this tree. My child hain't goin' ter look up in them branches an' see no shadow of evil thar. I hain't goin' ter lay buried in hits shade some day with yore black sperit hoverin' nigh. Sin ner shame hain't nuver teched hit yit, an' they hain't nuver goin' ter. The bright sun an' the clean wind air goin' ter come ter hit an' find hit like hit's always been. God's breath is goin' ter stir in hit the same es it's always done."

Just then a heavier cloud shut off the moonlight. Still holding the rope steadily enough to prevent its sudden jerking in premature signal, Dorothy came close to Rowlett.

"Turn round," she ordered, in clipped syllables of contempt. "I aims ter sot ye free."

She handed the loose rope to the man. Knowing full well the vital need of keeping it undisturbed, he held it gingerly. The other end of that line still rested in the hands of his executioners, who waited with no suspicion of any possible collusion between their victim and the woman.

Dorothy loosened the noose and slipped it from his neck, and her fingers busied themselves nervously with his wrist-knots. She worked fast and anxiously, for she had promised to set limits on the duration of that interview, and the interval of clouded darkness was precious; but while she freed the cords, she talked.

"I hain't doin' this fer yore sake, Bas. Ye richly merits ter die, an' I misdoubts ef ye escapes fur; but I hain't goin' ter suffer ye ter contaminate this tree. I aims ter give ye a few minutes' start, ef I kin."

Now she rose from the ankle fetters, and the man took a step, to find himself free.

"Begone!" ordered the woman tensely. "Don't tarry, an' don't nuver let me see ye ergin!"

She saw him cross the fence in the heavy shadow, hardly discernible even to her straining eyes, which had grown accustomed to the dark. She heard the light clatter of his feet, and knew that he was running for his life, with the speed and desperation of a hounded deer. Then she lifted her eyes to the rustling masses of cool serenity overhead.

Across the ranges came a warm, damp scent that promised rain. The clouds once more parted, bringing the tranquil magic of a silver-toned nocturne. The tree stood with its loftiest plumes moving lightly, as if brushing the heavens, where the clouds were flakes of opal fleece. Then the breeze stiffened a little, and the branches swayed with a swifter movement and a more audible sound; and the murmur was that of a benediction.

Dorothy waited as long as she dared. Her soul was quiet, despite the anger which she knew would shortly burst in an eruption over the threshold of her house. When she had stretched her allotted interval to its limit, she gave the rope its designated signal of a jerk, and saw the door swing to disgorge its impatient torrent of humanity. She saw the men coming with lanterns held high; saw them halt half-way, and heard their outbursts of angry dismay when the yellow light revealed the absence of the victim they had left in her keeping.

Dorothy turned and stood with her back against the great trunk and her fingers clutching at its seamed bark. There she felt the confidence of sanctuary.

"I couldn't suffer hit ter happen hyar," she told them in a steady voice. "Us two was married under this old tree, an' hit's like a church ter me. I couldn't let no man hang on hit. I turned him loose!"

For an instant she thought that Sim Squires would leap upon her with all the transferred rage that she had thwarted on the eve of its glutting. The others, too, seemed to crouch, poised, waiting for a signal from Sim; but Kenneth Thornton came over and took her in his arms.

With an abrupt transition of mood, Sim Squires wheeled to his waiting cohorts.

"Men," he shouted, "we kain't handily blame her. She's a woman, an' I honors her fer bein' tender-hearted; but any other tree 'll do jest as well! He kain't hev got fur off yit. Scatter out an' rake the woods!"

She saw them piling over the fence like a pack of human hounds, and she shuddered. The last man carried the rope, which he had paused to pull from the limb of the great walnut-tree. They had already forgotten her and the man they had come to kill. They were running on a fresh scent, and were animated with renewed eagerness.

For a few minutes Kenneth and Dorothy stood silent. Then to their ears came a shout; and though he said nothing, the husband thought he recognized the piercing shrillness of the hunchback's voice and the resonant tones of the sheriff. He wondered if Hump Doane had belatedly received an inkling of that night's work, and had gathered a posse at his back.

There followed a single shot — then a fusillade.

But Kenneth Thornton closed Dorothy in his arms, and they stood alone.

"The old tree's done worked hits magic ergin, honey!" he whispered. "An' this time I reckon the spell will last so long es we lives."

THE END

THE KISS OF APRIL

I THAT was old am young again,
  Because young April kissed my brow;
She met me in the lilac lane,
  And she and I are lovers now.

It cannot be for long, I know,
  Though fain am I to have it last;
She on her laughing way must go,
  And I must turn and join the past.

Nicholas Breton

Par Golf

BY EUGENE WHITE NIXON

Illustrated by A. L. Bairnsfather.

MRS. WALTMAN combined golf and flirting more successfully, perhaps, than any person of either sex had ever done before. Mrs. Waltman held the woman's golf championship at the Sierra Madre Club by virtue of having won the last tournament, and she was conceded the flirting championship by common consent.

There is no disputing the fact that Mrs. Waltman was a real expert at both of these ancient and honorable pastimes. She played a fine game, and she had a fine figure, which she displayed to the best advantage. To be sure, she was not of the intellectual type, but skill in flirting doesn't seem to imply brain-power.

Certainly she had a way with the men, or she would never have been able to add Dr. John Stone, the great surgeon, to her list of captives. She knew how to simulate intense interest in his growing fame as a surgeon and his increasing skill at golf, until the doctor was dimly conscious that his Wednesday afternoons with Mrs. Waltman were times of contentment such as he never experienced on other days.

Dr. Stone had taken up golf, in the beginning, strictly for relaxation and exercise. He had won his fame as a surgeon at the cost of close application and hard work, which finally threatened a breakdown. Hence the golf. Like many others who begin for exercise, he had become an enthusiast, and he looked forward to his three games a week with the greatest eagerness.

On Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings he played in a regular foursome, but on Wednesday afternoons he always paired with Mrs. Waltman. There was never any agreement that they would play; but whichever one arrived at the club first always waited for the other to appear, and then they would start off together as a matter of course.

It never occurred to the doctor that he and Mrs. Waltman were together too much. Mrs. Waltman was careful about that. He knew that many other men played with Mrs. Waltman. In fact, that was about the only way the lady could have a good match, for there were no other lady golfers in the club, and few in the State, who could give her a semblance of competition.

It was a common thing for her to play the Sierra Madre course in the eighties. She was a match for Dr. Stone at golf, and more than a match for him in some other ways.

What Mrs. Waltman's intentions were with regard to the great surgeon is rather uncertain. He was a very handsome and distinguished man, he must have had a very handsome income, and there are stranger things than that a married man should secure a divorce and marry another woman. In fact, that was what Mrs. Waltman's husband had done.

Anyhow, Mrs. Waltman was apparently doing all that a stylish and attractive woman could do to complete her conquest; and while there might be some doubt about her exact age, there could be none about her skill.

Mrs. Stone, the doctor's wife, first found out about his friendship with Mrs. Waltman through a remark of the club professional. Mrs. Stone never played golf, and scarcely ever visited the club, but on this particular afternoon she drove out to the links to deliver an important message which had just come to the house.

The doctor had an iron-clad rule that he was not to be called by telephone, telegraph, or in any other way, while engaged in his favorite recreation; but this matter was of unusual importance. Mrs. Stone's plan was to wait at the club until her husband's match was finished, and then to deliver the message.

The professional's enlightening remark came when she inquired the probable time of the doctor's return from the links.

"He's playing with Mrs. Waltman, and they usually finish about half past four, or sometimes a half-hour later," said Alec Watson.

Now Mrs. Stone had heard the name of Mrs. Waltman several times, but she had never heard before that the doctor made a practise of playing with that lady. She was nonplused to learn, through a few more discreet questions, that the doctor and Mrs. Waltman had played golf together every Wednesday for months. And as the players finished their match and approached the caddy-house, where Mrs. Stone was waiting for the doctor, his wife obtained further knowledge of the stage of the friendship.

IT NEVER OCCURRED TO DR. STONE THAT HE AND MRS. WALTMAN WERE TOGETHER TOO MUCH

She noticed that they seemed entirely absorbed in their conversation. She observed Mrs. Waltman's air of proprietorship toward her husband; and the doctor's jovial, laughing, care-free attitude was one she had not known him to adopt in her own presence for several years.

A sudden feeling of resentment arose within her, and she hurried away, leaving the telegram with Watson to be handed to her husband. And neither Mrs. Stone nor the doctor ever mentioned the incident.

II

WHAT Mrs. Stone learned that day at the club disturbed her greatly. Not that she became the victim of any unreasoning jealousy, such as a less intelligent person, or one of less emotional control, might have suffered. Mrs. Stone realized that her husband was not only a handsome and distinguished man whom she loved and admired, but that he was so great that he belonged not only to her, but also to science and to the world. Already, at the age of forty, he had made discoveries in medicine and surgery that had doubtless saved hundreds of lives, and there was no foretelling what other wonderful things he might yet do to benefit humanity.

No, Mrs. Stone was broad enough to realize that her own happiness must be sacrificed, if need be, to the career of one so valuable to the world at large as her husband. There must be no thought of anything like common quarreling with this great man who every day held the lives of fellow creatures in the hollow of his hand.

As Mrs. Stone thought about the situation in the light of her knowledge of Mrs. Waltman, she began to realize fully a fact of which she had previously been only dimly conscious—that she and her husband had drifted apart. True, there had never been any quarreling between them, and he was unfailingly kind and considerate; but they had come to have very little in common. His interest was in his work and his golf; hers in the management of the home and in the care of their two little boys. In fact, it came to Mrs. Stone suddenly that she had become as impersonal to her husband as one of his patients, or an assistant in one of his operations.

But why this impersonal attitude toward her? She had been presuming that his absorption in his work was responsible; but now she knew better, for he certainly had not been impersonal in his attitude toward Mrs. Waltman that afternoon as they left the golf-course. There must be something about Mrs. Waltman that she herself did not possess.

Mrs. Stone arose and viewed herself critically in the full-length mirror. Certainly, if she were competent to judge her own appearance, she was not inferior to Mrs. Waltman in that respect. She saw in the mirror a tall, well-formed figure, with a small head, an intelligent and handsome face, and a wealth of dark-brown hair. She was certain that at thirty she was a more beautiful woman than she had been at twenty, and she was considerably younger than Mrs. Waltman.

Possibly the doctor had come to know her too well, and there was nothing new about her to pique his attention; or else they were not interested in the same things. If she were a golf-player, like Mrs. Waltman, she might be better able to hold her husband.

She wondered if she could learn the game, and how long it would take. At Vassar she had held athletic records; she knew that she possessed strength, agility, and freedom of motion. She wondered how much of this she had lost in ten years—for certainly she didn't look or feel any older. She decided to investigate this matter of learning golf.

The following morning found Mrs. Stone in consultation with the golf-instructor at Byington's sporting-goods store, where she knew her husband had formerly taken lessons at the indoor school.

"Well, madam," said the instructor, in reply to her inquiry, "to tell you the truth, very few women golfers ever become at all expert, and those who do generally have to practise for years; but sometimes a man, or even a woman, will develop a flashy game in a few months. Such players are not usually very steady; but if a beginner would practise three hours a day for two months, instead of playing, he might become a good golfer."

"If I were to take a lesson or two, could you give me an honest opinion as to my possibilities?" asked Mrs. Stone.

"I could," was the reply.

"Then begin with me now," commanded Mrs. Stone.

"Madam," said the astonished but delighted professional, at the end of a half-hour of instruction, "you are by all odds the most remarkable pupil I have ever seen, man or woman! Unless I am terribly mistaken, you have a positive genius for this game."

"Then go ahead with me for another half-hour," said Mrs. Stone.

At the end of a week and a half of daily practise at the school, Mrs. Stone had made marvelous progress. The instructor had found her powerful, tireless, even-tempered, and willing to be driven; and, in his pride at her progress, he drove her without mercy.

So far all her practise had been indoors, but they had arranged to visit the new La Manda Club for a trial on a real golf-course on Saturday afternoon. Mrs. Stone had purchased a membership in this club through her friend Mrs. Alter, who was the only member of the club she knew, and whom she swore to secrecy. Her membership stood in the name of "Myra Stone," and no one about the club connected her with the great surgeon. Myra was a middle name almost forgotten by Mrs. Stone herself, but extremely convenient for the present emergency.

Mrs. Stone had fully impressed upon the instructor, Mr. Wilson, that golf was not

to be a recreation or a pleasure in her case —at least for the present. What she wanted was to become expert at it; pleasure could come later.

"I'm not going to waste any time playing around the course till I learn the strokes," was Mrs. Stone's attitude, with which her instructor fully agreed.

Wilson had always believed that if a person practised each stroke several thousand times before trying to play a game, he might be able to play almost perfect golf the first round.

So Mrs. Stone spent two solid hours on the putting-green—more putting practise than she would be likely to get in playing thirty games, and every putt was made according to instructions.

Following the putting came an hour of approaching from various distances with the mashie, and then a half-hour each of driving and of iron shots. At the end of four hours of solid work Mrs. Stone was ready to drop with exhaustion; but she was delighted to know that she was a natural born putter, and some of her drives had gone two hundred yards straight down the course.

During the third and fourth weeks she pursued the same policy. Every morning saw her at Byington's for an hour's practise with Wilson; every afternoon she was on the club course with her caddie, but never once did she play a round of golf, or even a single hole.

"I've no time to waste in unnecessary walking," was her comment to herself. "I must learn the strokes first of all."

All this time not a word had she said to John about her new ambition. She would become a good golf-player if possible, and then she would give him a surprise that would at least attract his attention. And she was feeling more and more like a girl, although neither she nor John were consciously aware of the change.

III

At the end of six weeks, Mrs. Stone was undoubtedly one of the finest putters in the State. She could approach, too, and drive remarkably well, thanks to her unusual strength. Her weakest point was her iron shot, but even that was far from poor.

At the end of two months it was decided that she should play around the course. Wilson's heart was in his throat as she took her stance to drive from the first tee. They both knew it was a vital test. How would she stand the strain?

But Mrs. Stone seemed to show no signs of uncertainty—in fact, she felt none. She had driven more than ten thousand balls in her two months' practise. She was in this thing to make good, and nothing was going to stop her now.

Her drive was a dandy—straight down the course, with a beautiful carry of a hundred and thirty yards and a nice roll. Her brassie shot was a replica of the drive, her mashie shot was on the green fifty yards away, and she just missed a par four by inches on a four-hundred-yard hole.

At the second, a three-hundred-and-forty-yard hole, her drive and an iron put her on the green, and she was down for a par four.

She got into trouble on a couple of holes during the round, and lack of practise with the niblick cost her several strokes on these occasions; but in spite of this she came in with a score of ninety, which satisfied her, as it was a new woman's record for the course, although she didn't turn in her card or tell her score. Her showing elated Wilson beyond measure.

"Of course, you are a total loss when it comes to playing out of trouble," said Wilson; "but you could have given any woman in America a run for the money today at match play, and you don't get into the rough and the bunkers often enough to do you any serious damage. We'll give you a little practise with the niblick next week."

And now Mrs. Stone came out with the idea that had been on her mind for days.

"I have decided to enter the invitation tournament for women at the Sierra Madre Club. It begins a week from next Tuesday. What chance do you think I have to win it?"

"Playing the way you played to-day," Wilson replied, "there is only one woman in this part of the country who could beat you in match play, and that is Mrs. Waltman. She would have to be at her best to do it, too. She is a fine player, and they say she knows how to bother her opponents so as to throw them off their game."

"If I happen to play with her, I don't think I shall let her bother me," said Mrs. Stone.

During the week that remained before the tournament, Mrs. Stone and Wilson

MRS. STONE HAD PRACTICED THIS STROKE THIRTEEN THOUSAND TIMES

played a round every day, and in addition Mrs. Stone observed her usual hours of practise. She was tireless, and never seemed to become stale. Every game brought an improvement in her play. Wilson was astounded.

Mrs. Alter had entered herself and Myra Stone, of the La Manda Club, in the tournament. Somehow she had given the impression that it was a "Miss" Stone, and nobody took the trouble to correct the mistake. In fact, only Wilson and Mrs. Alter knew her as the wife of the great surgeon, and they were sworn to secrecy.

On Tuesday morning Mrs. Alter and Mrs. Stone were the first on hand at the Sierra Madre Club, and the first off for the qualifying round.

"Shoot a score of a hundred, and you will qualify in the first flight," had been Wilson's advice to Mrs. Stone, who did not wish to make a score so low as to attract any special attention.

Mrs. Stone saw the wisdom of this advice, and she finally came in with ninety-nine, having deliberately wasted a putt on almost every green. At the same time, these missed putts were not altogether wasted, for Mrs. Stone kept aiming at points near the cup and trying to hit them for practise, and she was astonished at her own accuracy. After the match she departed without attracting any attention.

Nor did the name "Myra Stone" in the list of competitors for the championship flight attract attention. Mrs. Waltman had the best score of the day, an eighty-six, and then came several other stars of the city clubs. It is doubtful if even John Stone noticed the name of his wife among those of half a dozen other unknown golfers who qualified in the first flight. If he did, he certainly never connected the name with its real owner. He never even mentioned the tournament to his wife, although he was interested in it on account of Mrs. Waltman.

Mrs. Waltman had made him promise to "pull for her" in the tournament, and to be out on Saturday to see the final match —which, of course, she never doubted she would capture in a blaze of glory. She wanted John to see how great she was.

The rules of the tournament allowed matches to be played at whatever hour of the day suited the contestants. This coincided with Mrs. Stone's plans exactly. She was fortunate enough to arrange her match with Miss Harwell, her first opponent, for an early hour on Wednesday morning.

This arrangement enabled her to be

away from home when John was at the hospital, so that he would not wonder at her absence. If the great surgeon had any idea of the way in which his wife was turning over the care of her house and her boys to the servants and the governess, he would have wondered at the change in her.

IV

Mrs. Stone's victories over Miss Harwell, and over Mrs. Johnson, her second opponent, caused little comment, for neither of these players was at all well-known. In each game she was careful to win by a small margin. As in the qualifying round, she played her strokes perfectly up to the green, and then practised putting at imaginary holes near the real one, until she felt that it was time to win the match.

Her remarkable driving and approaching did cause some comment, but her matches were played early in the morning, when there were comparatively few spectators present.

On Friday morning, however, when she defeated Mrs. Stetson, the former State champion and present champion of the Melville Club, her fame spread like wildfire. Mrs. Stetson had been picked as certain winner in the lower half of the tournament, and much interest had already been displayed over her chances in the finals with Mrs. Waltman, who was certain to win in the upper half.

The match had started early, before the spectators were on hand, and when it was concluded Mrs. Stone hurried away. Her unexpected victory was the talk of the tournament throughout the day.

"Who is this Myra Stone who beats a former State champion by a score of six holes up and five to play?" "Where did she come from?" "Why haven't we heard of her before?" These were among the questions that were asked.

But somehow her identity did not come to light even then. Reporters calling the professional at La Manda were informed that she was a newcomer—he thought she was from the South. Mrs. Alter, appealed to for information, settled the question with the statement that Miss Stone was a new member at La Manda, and that she was from the South. She did not add that the lady in question had left the South ten years before.

It was not until Mrs. Stone appeared at the first tee to begin her match with Mrs. Waltman for the championship, on Saturday afternoon, that her identity became known. An immense gallery was present to follow the match, for Mrs. Waltman had a great following, and the sudden fame of the mysterious Myra Stone had spread far and wide.

Those in the crowd who knew the great surgeon's wife could hardly believe their eyes; and as the news spread there was more wonder than ever. The only way to account for what they saw was to believe that Mrs. Stone had been a champion golf-player in her younger days in the South, under some other name, and that she had taken the game up again lately.

Even yet Mrs. Waltman had no intimation of the identity of her opponent. She greeted her as "Miss Stone," when the two were introduced, and her greeting was so supercilious as to be insulting. Moreover, she turned away instantly, as if scarcely aware of her rival's presence, ignoring the extended hand.

Mrs. Waltman had just noticed John Stone, who had that instant arrived on the scene. As she turned from Mrs. Stone's proffered hand, she waved a laughing greeting to the dumfounded surgeon.

To her utter astonishment, John made no reply. This was rather disconcerting to Mrs. Waltman, for she had begun to feel that she was reaching the final stage in her conquest of the doctor. He had confided to her that on the following Monday he would depart from the city for a two weeks' vacation, which he proposed to spend golfing and resting at the famous Della Corona Hotel. He had been genuinely happy to learn that she, too, was planning a vacation at the same place, and had been enthusiastic when he found that she could arrange to be there at the same time. They would have a wonderful time playing golf together!

But now John was looking straight at her, and yet he showed no signs of recognition. She could not know that he had just become aware of the presence of his wife as Mrs. Waltman's opponent, and that he was so utterly amazed that for the life of him he couldn't have said a word if he had tried to do so.

It would be almost impossible to describe Dr. Stone's surprise at the sight of his wife in such an unexpected situation. He wondered if he were dreaming, or if he had suddenly become insane.

But there could be no doubt about the identity of the handsome, athletic-looking lady now taking her stance to drive the first ball. It certainly was his wife, although he had never seen her look so stunning before. She was dressed in the most becoming sports clothes ever seen on the Sierra Madre links. Mrs. Waltman was fairly in the shade in the presence of this magnificent creature.

Mrs. Stone's drive sent a thrill of pleasure through the nerves of every golf enthusiast in the large gathering. The smoothness and power of the stroke would have delighted a Harry Vardon. She had practised this stroke thirteen thousand times, and the ball was a perfect one. Away it sailed, straight down the course, with a beautiful carry and a nice run, and when it stopped it was two hundred yards from the tee. The crowd could not refrain from handclapping.

John Stone's failure to recognize her, and the cheer for her opponent's drive, somewhat disconcerted the usually imperturbable Mrs. Waltman; and while her drive would have passed as fair in an ordinary match, it was short and off direction in comparison with Mrs. Stone's.

"I WISH YOU WOULD PLEASE SIT DOWN AND KEEP QUIET WHILE I DRIVE!"

Mrs. Stone now executed a perfect mashie pitch which left her ball on the green, twenty feet from the hole. But at this point Mrs. Waltman displayed some of the ability that had made her a champion. After being short and to the right on her second shot, her approach from thirty yards stopped a foot from the cup.

As Mrs. Stone took her stance to putt, Mrs. Waltman played another of the tricks by which she had won more than one hard match. She began to talk in a low tone to her caddy. If she could anger or disconcert her opponent at the start of the match, she would probably win.

But instead of disconcerting Mrs. Stone, the talking seemed to have the opposite effect. Executing a putt that would have done credit to Wilson, the professional, she dropped the ball into the cup for a "birdie," and a win on the first hole. She had made several thousand practise putts from just that distance.

As the ball dropped into the cup, Mrs. Stone turned to the discomfited Mrs. Waltman, and with the sweetest smile in the world remarked:

"I intended to tell you, Mrs. Waltman, that you do not need to stop talking while I putt. Talking doesn't bother me at all, and I want you to enjoy the match as much as possible."

For an instant Mrs. Waltman was speechless with amazement. Then, as Mrs. Stone turned to take her driver from the caddy, she stamped her foot and replied:

"Don't you speak to me at all! I don't want to talk to you!"

Apparently Mrs. Stone did not hear this rejoinder. She quietly walked over to the second tee, and a moment later she sent off a ball with the same perfection of form that she had shown at the first tee.

Mrs. Waltman was in such a rage that she topped her drive, and the ball rolled into the bunker in front of the tee. White with fury, she turned to Mrs. Stone, who was standing near by.

"I wish you would please sit down and

keep quiet while I drive!" Mrs. Waltman said.

"I did keep quiet," replied Mrs. Stone, in no way disconcerted; "but if it will help your drives any, I'll sit down gladly."

Mrs. Waltman could think of no effective rejoinder.

V

PAR for the first nine holes at Sierra Madre is thirty-eight.

"I DID KEEP QUIET," REPLIED MRS. STONE, "BUT IF IT WILL HELP YOUR DRIVES ANY, I'LL SIT DOWN GLADLY"

Mrs. Stone played this half of the course in forty-one strokes, thus proving Wilson's theory about the efficacy of intensive practise. If the match had gone the full eighteen holes, there is little doubt that she would have beaten the woman's record for the course; but it ended long before eighteen holes had been played.

At the end of the nine holes Mrs. Waltman was five holes down. The pace was too fast for her at her best, and to-day she was not at her best, because in her attempts to anger and disconcert "Miss" Stone, she had only succeeded in becoming furious herself, to the detriment of her game.

At the thirteenth tee Mrs. Stone needed one more hole to win the match, and she won this hole without playing it out. As usual, her drive was perfect; but Mrs. Waltman, coming up after her opponent, completely foozled hers, so that the ball rolled only a few yards and then stopped.

This was the last straw for Mrs. Waltman. Without a word to any one, she picked up her ball and made her way through the crowd to the clubhouse.

Furious as she was over the loss of the match, however, she was not too furious to notice John Stone as she passed near him, and to recognize in him a possible source of sympathy.

Now John, throughout the match, had been intent upon his wife and her wonderful performance. He had hoped that at the close of the game he would be one of the first to congratulate her. Besides, he would never feel that he was really in his right mind until he learned from her own lips how this miracle had come to pass. To be stopped at this moment by Mrs. Waltman was irritating, to say the least.

Like every one else, John had been fully aware of Mrs. Waltman's unsportsmanlike conduct throughout the match. He was ashamed of her, and specially ashamed to be seen in her company at this moment, when he ought to be congratulating his wife.

"Oh, John!" cried Mrs. Waltman. "Wasn't I terribly off my game to-day?" She tried to summon back her loving smile and her famous coquetry, which, under the circumstances, were anything but attractive. John wondered that he had ever thought her attractive. "I wouldn't play with that awful woman again for the world!" she added, with what was supposed to be an appealing pout.

John couldn't help noticing that she looked warm and rather red-faced. He was too much of a gentleman to feel disgusted with a lady, but he certainly wanted to get away from her, and that as soon as possible. Above all, he didn't want her to learn yet that her opponent was his wife.

But when he did get away, a few minutes later, he found that his wife had already escaped her admirers and had left the club. He happened upon Wilson, whom he knew, and from whom he got some information about the miracle of the afternoon; and then he hurried home.

When he entered the house, he found his smiling and beautiful wife still dressed in the stunning golf costume that had caused so much comment at the club. She had their younger boy on her knee, while she instructed the older lad in the art of putting on the rug.

"Oh, daddy!" cried the boy, as John entered the room. "Mother won the tournament this afternoon!"

"I know she did, sonny," responded the great surgeon, looking proudly at his smiling wife. "I also know that your mother is the greatest woman in the world. Can you ever forgive me for neglecting you as I have, Myra?" he asked his wife, as he seated himself boyishly on the arm of her chair.

"Of course I can, John," she replied. "It was as much my fault as yours."

"Dear, won't you go with me to Buena Vista for my vacation? I want you to teach me to play golf." He looked at her eagerly.

"I thought you were going to Della Corona," she responded with a smile.

"I've changed my mind," was John's reply.

GOD'S WAITING

OVER the meadows the spring wind went,
And he swept them clean for a great event;
He laughed and laughed as he sped along—
Oh, he sang a wonderful song!
"Old apple-tree, thou art gnarled and gray,
And I know it's been full many a day
Since thou hadst thy share of apples red;
But try again—God's waiting! The dead
Can come to life in the spring!"

Over the meadows the spring wind came,
And he whispered low a magic name;
He laughed and laughed as he sped along—
Oh, he sang a wonderful song!
"'Tis spring! Oh, soul of man, arise!
Forsake thy sin! In Paradise
Is one who sinned—whose sins were red;
So try again—God's waiting! The dead
Can come to life in the spring!"

K. Dolores Dempsey